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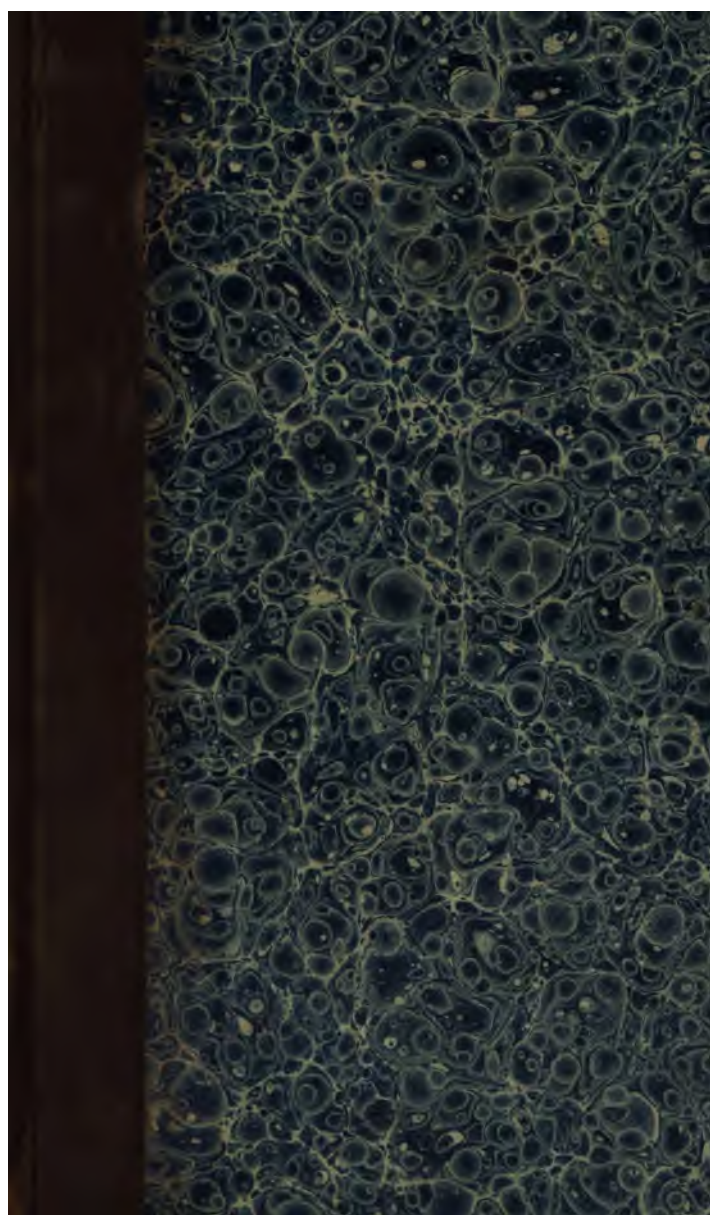
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Statement presented to Judge Erskine.

A STATEMENT

PRESENTED TO THE

RIGHT HON. MR. JUSTICE ERSKINE,

PRESIDENT OF

THE "TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY,"

RELATIVE TO

CERTAIN MOST EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

CONNECTED WITH

A LETTER ADDRESSED BY THE REV. A. S. THELWALL,

SECRETARY OF THAT SOCIETY,

TO ARTHUR STANLEY, ESQUIRE,

PRESIDENT OF THE BATH AUXILIARY TRINITARIAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Second Edition, with additions.

LONDON:

DUNCAN AND MALCOLM, 37, PATERNOSTER ROW.

M. DCCC. XL.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

London, April 30, 1840.

The Gentlemen who send forth the following "Statement" beg leave to premise, that it is not published by Mr. Wilks; and it was with great reluctance, and only after repeated solicitations, that he allowed it to be published. The facts and documents were collected by him to be submitted to the Right Honourable Mr. Justice Erskine, the President of the Trinitarian Bible Society; but several Clergymen and Laymen, who have become acquainted with the substance of them, are of opinion that they ought to be made public, not only in justice to Mr. Wilks, but for the sake of truth and righteousness, and for the information of the Officers, Subscribers, and Friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and its Auxiliaries; many of whom assuredly cannot be aware of the very serious facts here disclosed.

It is due to Mr. Wilks to add, that nothing which he had written was at all personal or offensive, or could have justly called forth such an attack as that of the Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society. He has been very unjustly treated, and it was imperative upon him to state the facts of the case, for the clearing of his own character and veracity from the aspersions cast upon him by Mr. Thelwall.

As the Statement consists chiefly of documents which speak for themselves, together with arguments which must stand upon their own merits, it is considered to be most conducive to calm inquiry, to submit it without any unnecessary addition of facts or names; but it is of course duly authenticated to Mr. Justice Erskine.



P R E F A C E

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE discussions which have occurred since the publication of the first edition of this Statement respecting the affairs of the Trinitarian Bible Society have confirmed its truth, and proved its importance. Some members of the Society have declared that they were not accurately acquainted with its constitution, and others that they knew little of the detail of its proceedings; and some have ceased to be connected with it, either as officers or members. In order to prevent the Statement being read, the Secretary endeavoured to discredit it by affirming in a newspaper advertisement, that the "Clergymen and Laymen" who published it were not "Gentlemen," and that Mr. Justice Erskine had denied its authenticity; but the learned Judge has been pleased to reply that "It had been authenticated," and that he "Had not the slightest idea of conveying any opinion that it was not genuine."

Many new corroborations of the facts mentioned in the Statement are forthcoming, should any defence of the Society or its Secretary render it necessary. The following is a specimen. The Editor of the Christian Observer, in order to shew the imperfection of the Society's tests, the unsteadiness of its proceedings, and the want of the requisite judgment and discretion in its conductors for the management of the affairs of a Bible Society, alluded to what took place in its history upon the matter of Irvingism, and quoted among other proofs some passages from the Record Newspaper written at the time. Mr. Thelwall, in his usual manner of reply, attempted to make it believed that the Conductors of the Record had "come to a full conviction, that the passage quoted by the Christian Observer had been written in the heat of contention, under an entire misapprehension of the facts of the case;" adding, "Can any thing be more unworthy of the Editor of a religious periodical, than thus to rake up the abandoned statements of another, in order to propagate what he knows to be false?" No passage in all Mr. Thelwall's pamphlet was more quoted and relied upon by the friends of the Trinitarian Society than this. To rake up from another publication "statements which its conductors

had abandoned, in order to propagate what *he knew to be false!*" Could anything be more wicked! This glaring "conscious" "downright falsehood" was descanted upon in proof of the calm accuracy of the Trinitarian Secretary's assertion, that the Editor of the *Christian Observer* penned more falsehoods in six lines than he could reply to in six pages. But what say the "Conductors of the Record" themselves in a recent number of their paper (June 1, 1840).

"Mr. Thelwall states that what we wrote with reference to Irvingism in the Trinitarian Bible Society, was written 'in the heat of contention, under an entire misapprehension of the facts of the case,' and he also talks of what we did write as '*abandoned statements.*' We think it right to observe, with reference to these allegations, that we never wrote anything in our lives with a clearer perception of the facts of the case than what we wrote on that subject; that our work gave us satisfaction at the time, and gives us satisfaction now in the remembrance of it; and that we have not '*abandoned*' a single iota of it."

But has the Society "*abandoned*" its vituperative course of proceeding? At its late annual meeting it was resolved, that this meeting "*desires and prays*" "*that peculiar grace may be vouchsafed to all the members of the Society, and especially to all who are concerned in conducting its operations, to enable them to maintain feelings of meekness and Christian love towards all those brethren who may differ from them.*" This desire and prayer were excellent; but very different was the "*desire*" from the performance; for the speeches, notwithstanding these good words, were in the usual style; even Lord Mountcashel, one of the two Vice-Presidents, shewing his "*feelings of meekness and love*" by declaring that what was said about Irvingism was "*a libel upon the Society, to which no man dared to put his name,*" that "*it proceeded from the prince of darkness, and ought to be treated, as he (Lord Mountcashel) treated it, with contempt.*" The Secretary also immediately after the meeting published an advertisement to persuade the public that the "*Statement*" was "*unauthenticated,*" and that the Clergyman and Laymen who issued it were not "*gentlemen.*" Yet this good inert paper-resolution is triumphantly held up as a proof that the conductors of the Society do really "*desire and pray*" for "*peculiar grace*" to carry on its operations with "*meekness and Christian love towards all those brethren who may differ from them.*"

As to the assertion that no man "*dared put his name*" to what was said respecting the Irvingian agitation in the Society, the reader of the *Statement* will find *many* names, and what is better than names, will find documents which cannot be controverted. No names! The "*Christian Observer*" and the "*Record*" abounded in names. There were also the names of many who quitted the Society on this very account. There were the names mentioned in the Society's own minutes. Did Captain Gordon, and Mr. Haldane, and many others, *speak* anonymously? Did Mr. Wilks not give his name in his Letters to Bishop Burgess; or Mr. Sargent in his Letter to Mr. Philips? It is easier to affect "*contempt*" and to talk of "*the Prince of darkness,*" than to disprove facts. Irvingism, blessed be God, has nearly died away; but those who were shaken by its "*lying wonders,*" are not men to be relied upon for wisdom and sobriety in conducting the affairs of a Bible Society.

The manner in which the Society has expended its donations, subscriptions, and

contributions—that is, its whole disposable income—has justly excited astonishment. In the present edition the result is shewn to be even worse than was stated in the former; but the minute details there given have been omitted, in order to simplify the calculation. If therefore any reply should be offered, it would be necessary to speak to the aggregate statement, rather than to merge the question in some minor detail.

The Society's deliberate breach of faith and violation of its constitution, by the suggestion to the Liverpool Auxiliary to expel Trinitarian dissenters, and, if it please, the members of the church of Scotland, from all share in the management, has also justly excited strong feeling, especially as such conduct in one "religious institution" tends to weaken the public faith in all others. Some of the members justify this proceeding, on the ground that it ought to be a Church Society; which might be urged as a reason for dissolving the present institution, and forming a new one; but is no excuse for being "truce-breakers." The proofs in the Statement (page 44 to 49) are ample and incontrovertible. There is the Provisional Committee's declaration of "unfeigned grief" that such an "erroneous impression" had gone abroad as that "they intended to dissolve the connexion between the members of the Established Church and those of dissenting denominations of Christians"—"there are the laws of the Society pledging an inseparable union:—there is the declaration of Mr. Thelwall himself that it would be "truly an act of schism," from "any motives of convenience or expediency," to "desire to form a merely Church Society from which *our dissenting brethren* would have been excluded:—"there is the official assertion (page 39) that "The first characteristic principle of every religious Society is that one and the same religious test should qualify for membership and management," on which basis it was declared (April 16, 1832) "The Trinitarian Bible Society was placed from its origin:—"there is the ninth rule, which stipulates that "All Auxiliaries, Branch-Societies, and Associations" shall adopt the principles "set forth in the laws" of the Parent Society:—and there is the nullification, the gross deliberate violation, of every syllable of this from "motives of convenience or expediency" in the Committee's propositions to the Liverpool Auxiliary. Who after this can trust such a Society? Ought any man who loves truth and fair-dealing to continue a member of it? Can prayer be offered in faith for a blessing upon its labours?

Another document shall now be given, to which the name of the writer (Mr. Wilks) is attached. This paper deserves the serious consideration of the Committee, and their constituents will most assuredly consider it of great importance.

To the Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society.

GENTLEMEN,

You have published an Advertisement in which you say, in allusion to the "Statement presented to Mr. Justice Erskine," your President, that you "do not feel yourselves called upon to answer anonymous attacks upon the

Society;" but that you "invite the fullest scrutiny of all the members into its concerns, with respect to the faithful and economical expenditure of its funds and the entire course of its proceedings."

Permit me to say, as I collected the facts and documents to be submitted to Mr. Justice Erskine, (though I did not publish the Statement, and was very reluctant to allow it to be published, nor would it have been published at all but for the extraordinary perseverance with which your Secretary's pamphlet was being forced into circulation,) that neither your subscribers nor the public will allow such serious matters to be silently disposed of as "anonymous attacks;" for there is nothing put forth anonymously that requires a name; the letters and other documents are accurately transcribed, the most important passages being from your own publications; minute references also are given, with names and dates; and the original papers were offered for the scrutiny of your President; who has candidly declared that he "never harboured the thought" that the Statement was "forged" or "not genuine," or "unauthenticated." But even were it "anonymous," this is no reply to the serious charges contained in it, and which are grounded upon documentary evidence.

The "Clergymen and Laymen" who published the Statement "considered it," they say, "to be most conducive to calm inquiry to submit it without unnecessary addition of facts and names;" and they were perhaps led to that conclusion from considering that your Society conducts its discussions through an agent who replies to opponents, by denouncing them as "slandrers," "persecutors," "publishers of gross unprovoked libels," deliberate assertors of "conscious" "downright falsehoods," "not gentlemen," and "raking up the abandoned statements of another in order to propagate what they know to be false." Documents therefore were of more importance than assertions.

As however you have now virtually pledged yourselves to reply to a Statement with an authentic signature, I will respectfully mention the substance of the objections against the constitution and proceedings of your Society.

1. That a few unauthorised individuals, chiefly laymen, being neither a church, nor the delegated representatives of a church, or of the church universal, have usurped ecclesiastical functions by setting up certain doctrinal tests, as precisely pointing out what is, and what is not, essential for Christian union in the exercises of public prayer and thanksgiving, and in translating and circulating the Oracles of God.

2. That the tests so laid down are inadequate where a test is requisite; the partial exclusion being a virtual fraternization with all that is not excluded. While shutting out a Pascal and Fenelon, who are argued not to be "sound Trinitarians," but believers in a fourth person in the Godhead, the Society refused to institute a test against Irvingism; and it embraces every sect, however wild, fanatical, or immoral, which does not call itself popish or antitrinitarian; and it does dishonour to many doctrines of God's holy word by undertaking to decide that they are not among "essential truths." The leaders of the Society themselves sanctioned these inferences when they refused to institute an anti-Irvingite test on the ground that "the naming one is a tacit admission of the eligibility of all the others not named." Assuredly it is.

3. That your tests, besides being drawn up without church authority, and inadequate as a code of faith, are in practice nugatory; not being enforced by any testimonial, election, inquiry, or declaration; so that, notwithstanding

PREFACE.

the nominal test, any man who pleases may become a member, the only qualification actually insisted upon being the pecuniary subscription; and this after all that was said about "Achan's wedge" and "the Socinian's guinea" in other Societies.

4. That the Society, after having established its tests, and solemnly pledged itself to abide by them, and to make no theological or ecclesiastical distinctions between Protestant Trinitarians, has deliberately broken its promises and violated its constitution; its Committee having suggested to the Liverpool Auxiliary (and thereby to every other Auxiliary if it so please) to form itself into a Society of "a more decidedly Church of England character than either the Church Missionary Society or that for promoting Christianity among the Jews," by expelling from all share in the management of the institution, first, Trinitarian Dissenters, and secondly, if it see fit, members of the Church of Scotland.

5. That the Society, though professing to be exclusively a Bible Society, has further broken faith by expending large sums confided to it for the circulation of the Scriptures, in printing controversial pamphlets; nay, that even its Reports are for the most part not a narrative of its proceedings, but devoted to controversy. The Report for 1837 admitted that the Society is obliged to be at great expence, and to keep a Clerical Secretary to "maintain principle," (that is, to issue controversial publications,) in numerous places where "scarcely an opportunity is given for entering upon its actual operations as a Bible Society."

6. That it has been from first to last engaged (to use the words of one of the early members of its Committee in leaving it) in "picking holes;" holes in other Societies and holes in private character; as is specially evinced in the recent publication of its responsible stipendiary Clerical Secretary, speaking throughout as the organ of the Committee, "we," "us," "our report," "our committee;" and having received his appointment for the purpose "of more extensively spreading the principles of the Society, and of enlarging the sphere of its operations," "at an adequate salary," in order that his "entire time shall be devoted, under the Lord's blessing to these objects."

7. That the decision to which the Society came by its vote upon the question of Irvingism, and the conduct and writings of several of its leading officers in regard to falsely-alleged miracles therewith connected, justly preclude all confidence in their wisdom and discretion, in making or correcting versions of the Scriptures, and conducting the affairs of a Bible Society.

8. That the Society is wholly unnecessary; seeing that members of the Church of England can procure Bibles, and aid biblical circulation, both at home and abroad, either through the Christian Knowledge Society or the British and Foreign Bible Society, or both; and that Trinitarian Dissenters may do the same through the latter.

9. That being unnecessary, it is also *schismatical*; its place being every where pre-occupied, so that it cannot obtain patronage but by fomenting jealousies against other institutions; which has been its uniform practice, wherever it has attempted operations; and often with the unhappy result that after shaking confidence in other institutions without being able to secure it for its own, the work of circulating the Scriptures has been seriously impeded, as in Liverpool and elsewhere. One of your founders too truly remarked, "I believe it will be the temptation of the devil on our new Society, to say, Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou."

10. That, in order to attract patronage to itself, it has brought unjust and

exaggerated accusations against Bibles issued by other institutions; more especially that it held up to suspicion and reproach, as incorrect and unauthorised, the English Bible as it is printed at the universities, and is used in all churches, chapels, and families, and is issued by all societies, thereby perplexing and distressing the minds of the weak and ignorant; so that had not the publications of Dean Turton and others, and the Oxford reprint of the faulty and incorrect edition of 1611, counteracted, through the mercy of God, the agitations produced by these proceedings, the most alarming consequences must have ensued.

11. That the affairs of the Society are conducted in a close and secret manner, which affords great facilities for abuse and manifold evils. In the Christian Knowledge Society every member has a right to attend and vote at the Monthly Board; in various other societies in which the business is transacted by an elected Committee, there are various checks to prevent its being a close, and in effect irresponsible and self-perpetuated, body; first, that a portion of its members shall go out yearly and be replaced by new ones; secondly, that subscribers and benefactors of a certain amount shall be entitled to attend and vote; and, thirdly, that all clerical members shall have this right: whereas in this Society these checks are laid aside; the committee is a "close committee;" it may be a body of partizans; it may communicate or withhold information just as it pleases; the subscribers cannot, either as governors or clerical members, demand access to its sittings; and should any be admitted by favour they cannot vote; and as for the public, the Treasurer has officially intimated his opinion that even the printed Reports of the Society may not be submitted to the inspection of a non-subscriber.

12. That there is no guarantee to the members of the Church of England, or to the catholic church of Christ, that the whole management of the affairs of the Society shall not fall into the hands of a sect; for every one of the "twelve ministers of the Gospel of Christ," and the "twenty-four laymen," may be Irvingites, or Anabaptists, or persons of any other particular persuasion.

13. That the Society is unculy under lay-influence, the lay-members of the committee being double the number of the clerical; and clerical members of the Society not being permitted ex-officio to attend, as in other Societies, to restore the balance. Even a bishop would have no such right: nor by the rules, if the whole of the bishops were members could they become committee-men. The utmost that could be done would be to select "twelve" of them as being "ministers of the Gospel," thereby excluding the rest and all other "ministers."

14. That though the rules declare that the subscribers are the constituents, and the committee an elected body, yet the committee have usurped the authority of the constituency, the Secretary having officially declared (See Quarterly Extracts, No. XI. p. 91), in speaking of the Liverpool committee, that it "had full power to exclude them [Trinitarian Dissenters; and therefore, if it pleased, any other class of persons, including churchmen] from any interference in the management; even if they had shewn [as the constitution of the Society allow] any disposition to come forward."

15. That the pecuniary affairs of the Society are so conducted that out of £7636. 5s. 4d. expended of donations, subscriptions, congregational and other collections, only £476. 16s. 8d. have gone for Bibles;—not twenty per cent.; the remaining £6159. 8s. 8d.—more than eighty per cent.—having been absorbed in "management," that is, in salaries, pamphleteering, advertise-

ments, printing, office and travelling expences, and incidentals. Fair allowance must of course be made for the "management" by sales, the foregoing relating only to the disposable income; but no estimate can reduce the above figures to a provident system, especially as the Society has been exempted from expenses for foreign agents and other heavy disbursements.

Such, Gentlemen, are the charges urged against the constitution and proceedings of your Society. I have not meant to express them in unkind words; though it is not possible to put a bill of indictment into an agreeable form. The majority of your subscribers—and I believe many members of the committee—know very little of the affairs of the Society, and have been led to patronize it from having heard of objections to other societies, and being told that the constitution and proceedings of yours were unexceptionable. It is for them now seriously to consider the above particulars, with prayer for Divine direction as to the course which they ought to pursue. For myself, I have been for a quarter of a century a member of the Christian Knowledge Society, which has this year circulated 223,976 Bibles and Testaments, and which is guarded by the adequate doctrinal tests of the church to which I belong; and also of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which has sent forth this year (in whole or part, at home and abroad) 776,310 copies (making a total of more than twelve millions) and which has no test except that of willingness to circulate orthodox Bibles (no Romanist or Antitrinitarian can, without suicide, circulate our authorized version, especially with its headings); but I could not be a member of a Society which is neither a church nor an open institution; which by having a test would make me countenance whatever it does not reject; which makes a creed without communion; which would oblige me by an unholy compromise to affect brotherly union in prayer with the wildest enthusiasts and most corrupt sectaries, provided they do not call themselves Papists or Antitrinitarians; and which, for the reasons above assigned, I consider to be, however unconsciously, impeding the work of the Lord instead of furthering it.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

SAMUEL CHARLES WILKS.

*St. John's Wood Road, Regent's Park,
June 22, 1840.*

Nothing need be added to Mr. Wilks's comprehensive and able digest, powerful and conclusive arguments, and forcible yet temperate and Christian appeals; but as many members of the Society are not well acquainted with its history, the facts and documents in the Statement are respectfully submitted, by the Gentlemen who have undertaken the publication of this Address, to their serious consideration.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ERSKINE,

&c. &c. &c.

THE following statement, Sir, is most respectfully presented to you as President of the "Trinitarian Bible Society;" and it contains a disclosure of facts which your responsible office in that institution, as well as the purity of your ermine in another capacity, and the piety, amiableness, and love of truth and justice, of your private character, cannot but induce you carefully to investigate.

It had been well, if all the agents of that Society had remembered the prayer which you offered up for them in May 1834:—"May the Lord enable you to maintain His glory in the true spirit of the Gospel of peace." Two years after, when you presided at the public meeting, you remarked that there was danger, from the constitution of the Society, of its leading "to irritating discussions, which if they did not generate uncharitable feelings, excited suspicions of their existence;" and you added, that "on account of that tendency, and because such imputations have on this ground been cast against the Society," you "earnestly cautioned those gentlemen who might have to address the meeting, to avoid studiously the use of any terms which might occasion pain or irritation." The imputations to which you alluded came not only from those who had never united themselves to the Society, but from those who had been its friends, and had seen its most intimate workings. Proofs ample and numerous are extant; but the whole may be summed up in the mournful words of the Rev. H. Melvill, who in withdrawing from office in the Society, remarked, that "the committee, instead of minding their own business and distributing the word of God, had been employed, from their formation to that hour, in quarrelling and picking holes in private character."

Would, Sir, that this sad declaration were not still true. Wherever your Society goes, it begins with "picking holes,"—holes in other societies; and if the high character of those who support them is appealed to, then holes in character. A letter will be laid before you, from the president of the Bath Auxiliary Trinitarian Society, in which, in reply to a complaint of his abetting your Secretary Mr. Thelwall, in an attack upon private character, he frankly avows, in the true spirit of partizanship, that considering the complainant "merely in the character of an antagonist to a cause which I regard as the sacred cause of God, my sympathies are altogether on the other side;" his attention being "mainly attracted," he says, "to the principles involved rather than to the persons." It is in this spirit that such words as "neologian," "infidel," "falsehood," "slander," "calumny," and the like, are so familiar in the lips of your agents, when they wish to promote what they are pleased to consider "the sacred cause of God." How often is it asked, "Is that excellent and amiable man, Mr. Justice Erskine, aware of all this? would he be content to be thus dragged through the mire—throughout the country, as the President of this Society, if he

knew the spirit in which it is conducted?" Assuredly, Sir, you would not; and some facts shall now be laid before you which you will not feel inclined to settle by Mr. Stanley's one-sided maxim.

The letter of your Secretary, the Rev. Algernon Sydney Thelwall, was published early in December, 1839. In this letter he uses, respecting a clergyman of the Diocese of London, the Rev. Samuel Charles Wilks, (there is no question on any side as to who was meant,) such language as the following:—

"With regard to the Christian Observer, I might, perhaps, be justified in taking the same ground,—as all the attacks which it contains are also anonymous. That publication, however, stands (I admit) on somewhat different grounds. It has maintained, for a long series of years, with a certain portion of the Religious World, the position (if not the character) of a highly respectable publication. *The Editor is responsible for every thing which appears (without the name of the writer) in its pages.* The most objectionable portions of what does appear against us, are from his own pen; and he might, with some show of justice, *deem it little better than affectation to consider him as an anonymous writer;** not only because *his name is well known*, but because a large portion of his present statements are nothing else but a repetition of MISREPRESENTATIONS, and SLANDERS which were published some years back in a separate pamphlet, to WHICH HIS NAME WAS PREFIXED. He comes, therefore,

'In such a questionable shape,'
that I will not refuse a distinct reply, to some portion at least of his *misrepresentations* I have carried forbearance much too far:—not merely to the material hindering of my own usefulness, but to the compromising of the cause of truth and godliness. And this, alas! without producing the least effect in mitigating the *rancour* of one, who, while he professes that which would constitute him a Christian brother, is acting perseveringly the part of an *enemy, persecutor, and SLANDERER!*"

These charges of "misrepresentation," "slander," "rancour," and "acting perseveringly the part of an enemy, persecutor, and slanderer," are poured forth throughout your Secretary's pamphlet, with a profusion unexampled. Mr. Wilks is charged specifically with five "conscious," "downright falsehoods," besides as many deliberate "misrepresentations;" and such epithets and accusations as the following meet the eye in every page: "A combination of ignorance and misrepresentation;" "gross misrepresentation;" "infidel sort of reasoning;" "a subtle advocate, if not a very scrupulous one;" "if any respectable person should ask me" (Mr. Wilks not being in Mr. Thelwall's estimation such); "a cause to support which he is conscious can only be maintained by downright falsehoods;" "he rakes up the abandoned statements of another in order to propagate what he knows to be false;" "a man whose Protestantism is of a very questionable character, who may be considered a semi-advocate of Popery;" "a tissue of ignorance, misrepresentation, and falsehood;" puts forth things "false and dishonest;" also "calumnies," and "detected falsehoods and misrepresentations;" "disgraces himself and the cause of the Gos-

* As to the remark about anonymous Editors, Mr. Wilks never sheltered himself from responsibility. The following note appeared in the very Number of the Christian Observer published only two days before Mr. Thelwall's Letter. "We quite think with Dr. Wolff that conductors of periodical works should give their names, and we should do so if it were not popularly considered an impertinent intrusion. However, as the Editor of this publication has held that office ever since the year 1816, and has necessarily had large correspondence, and never denied his name to any person who complained personally of what had appeared in his pages, (though he has often thus incurred displeasure, being made responsible for what he did not write,) Dr. Wolff may easily find him out by inquiring at Exeter Hall, or at Dr. Wolff's publisher's, or ours."

pel ;" " feels an awkward consciousness that falsehood and misrepresentations are his only resource ;" and " can utter more falsehoods in six lines, than I (Mr. Thelwall) can confute in as many pages."

This, sir, is the style of your Stipendiary Clerical Secretary (it is necessary to use that epithet to distinguish him from the Honorary Clerical Secretary), who is allowed an income of £300 per annum to do the work of the Trinitarian Bible Society ; and such is the fashion in which he executes his trust. These things, however, do not strike Mr. Stanley as reprehensible, seeing they are to promote " the sacred cause of God." That the President of the Society will concur in this conclusion with the Bath President and the London Secretary, is not credited.

But here, sir, you may fairly ask, whether, unjustifiable as is your Secretary's language, he had received provocation by any thing resembling it upon the part of the individual whom he thus attacks. Had he been called a liar, or slanderer, or any thing of the sort ? Of this you may easily judge ; for the short pamphlet entitled " The Trinitarian and British & Foreign Bible Societies ; reprinted from the Christian Observer," contains every syllable which Mr. Wilks either privately, or as Editor of the Christian Observer, or any friend or correspondent of his, has written respecting the Trinitarian Society for nearly eight years ; and this pamphlet contains nothing personal, much less abusive : and as for Mr. Thelwall, who you would suppose from his Letter had been most unchristianly used, there is not a syllable of personal incivility towards him. In proof of this, if you have not read the pamphlet, the written testimony might be quoted of at least twenty respectable clergymen and laymen ; one of whom, a sample of many others, after perusing the publication with some jealousy, wrote to Mr. Wilks as follows :

" I confess I have been delighted exceedingly to find how entirely blameless you are. Your writing is strong and pointed ; but there is not a syllable of personality, much less of scurrility. I imagine the (Mr. Thelwall's) publishers must have read the article, as they seem to have been so thoroughly, and indeed so justly, frightened. But my object in writing is to entreat you, should you have any communication with Judge Erskine, to implore him to read your article, and then Mr. Thelwall's Appeal ; and I think he must acknowledge that the latter is perfectly unjustifiable : and I think, further, he will disavow it officially on behalf of the Society. I feel a longing to stitch you and Thelwall up together, with a little introduction, inviting people to read Thelwall first, and then to see what his victim hath done to merit such horrible castigation. I trust your righteousness will be brought to light."

You will doubtless, sir, be surprised at the foregoing declaration that this reprint from the Christian Observer of last August and September contains every title which Mr. Wilks, or any other writer in that publication, had penned concerning your Society since early in the year 1832 ; for the whole tenor of your Secretary's pamphlet is to convey the impression that there has been a constant overflowing stream of invective ; and that Mr. Wilks had " acted perseveringly the part of an enemy, persecutor, and slanderer ;" and in particular that Mr. Thelwall had been most " perseveringly " maligned. But if you will look to the Indexes of the Christian Observer for 1838, 1837, 1836, 1835, 1834, 1833, you will not so much as find either Mr. Thelwall's name, or that of the Society ; or any allusion to it. So much for persevering malignity.

And how came the subject to be revived ? Who was the originator of a new pamphlet controversy ? Your secretary, Mr. Thelwall ; and this out of the sacred funds contributed by your subscribers to purchase Bibles, not party tracts ; and writing officially, as his pamphlet stated, " On behalf of the Com-

mittee of the Trinitarian Bible Society." You, sir, are perhaps not aware of the forbearance and Christian feeling which your Society has so ill-required. The following are in brief the facts. The conductors of the Christian Observer being satisfied with the British and Foreign Bible Society as an open institution; and thinking that those members of the Anglican Church who did not approve it, might get their Bibles from the Christian Knowledge Society, opposed the institution of the Trinitarian Bible Society, as in their view needless, and also subject to many objections. In the year 1832, the Editor, coinciding in opinion with such men as Wilberforce, Lord Teignmouth, and Bishop Ryder, not to mention many much honoured living names, addressed a series of letters to Bishop Burgess, at his Lordship's request, going fully into the questions at issue. These are the letters which your Secretary says were a series of "misrepresentations and slanders," "to which his (Mr. Wilks's) name was prefixed." Even supposing they were, it is rather late, and not very forgiving, to open an attack upon them in December 1839; in order to justify the word "perseveringly," keeping out of sight seven years of profound peace. If, sir, you think it worth while to go into this question, a score or two of letters are still producible from many most pious and amiable men—prelates, clergymen, and laymen—including some of your own friends, whose estimate was diametrically opposed to that of your fervid Secretary. One testimony only shall be adduced, and that the printed testimony of an opponent; but a candid opponent, who had not adopted Mr. Stanley's maxim of going with your party without much regarding private character. The "Christian Remembrancer," a Church of England magazine, strongly opposed to the Bible Society, and which was not slack on many occasions in animadverting upon the Christian Observer, said of these Letters:

"The best work we have read on either side is Mr. Wilks's: it is very methodical, very elaborate, but very mild; written, indeed, in the best possible tone; earnest without acrimony; candid, but dexterous!—the production of an unsuspecting and Christian heart. The Bible Society may be proud of their advocate."

An extract from the "concluding observations" in Mr. Wilks's Letters to Bishop Burgess, may suffice to shew whether so many years after the writer is justly described by your Secretary as a persevering slanderer, enemy, persecutor, and concoctor of conscious downright falsehoods. The following was the way in which Mr. Wilks addressed his venerable friend:—

"Having been obliged, my lord, to write the whole of these letters with rapid pen, in ill health, and often on my couch, in about three weeks, sending off the manuscript to press, sheet by sheet, without revision, I fear that I have not done that measure of justice to the Bible Society which longer time and more favourable circumstances might have secured. Some thoughts or statements may have been too often repeated, and others of importance omitted; but upon a survey of the whole, rough as it is, I feel persuaded that sufficient has been produced to vindicate the principle of the institution, and to shew that there has been nothing in the practice that, of necessity, requires an alteration of that principle, or, in truth, could be improved by it. If my friends will also kindly accept of the plea of haste for any harsh word that may have dropped from my pen, and which leisure for revision might have softened more to the meekness of Christ, I shall feel deeply grateful; for all who have been forced into controversy know how difficult it is not to seem to write severely when it was meant only to write to the point. Yes, my lord, sincerely, and from my heart, I may say, that if in the course of this rapid and unrevised writing I have let fall any sharp-pointed expression, I would humble myself for it, first before my God, next before my offended brethren, and lastly before your lordship, whose character and spirit I know too well to mix up your name with unkindly discussion. I have often reflected with much interest on a conversation, some ten years ago, with your lordship in the room where I am writing, on the inestimable blessings of Christian peace. Your lord-

ship found me composing a discourse for the pulpit on that blessed exhortation 'Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace; and I remember, in conversing upon it, you alluded to that natural state of alienation of the heart of man from God by reason of the Fall, which required on our part, as well as on the part of God, reconciliation, and went on to notice the way of reconciliation exhibited in the Gospel, through the obedience unto death of Christ, and through faith in his name, and the fruits of this in the cultivation and enjoyment of peace—peace with God, peace of conscience, peace with our fellow-Christians, peace with every thing but sin.' Yes, my lord, this is indeed a blessed privilege; but as we are to follow 'peace with holiness; and as there is the limitation of 'as much as lieth in you, it appears that on earth peace is not always to be obtained. Truth is not to be relinquished; and therefore discussion, not to say controversy, may be sometimes necessary: and would that it could be always conducted in that blessed spirit which I have heard your lordship so well describe, and of which I have ever regarded your own controversial publications as exemplary models. The amiable Melancthon, when he summed up the reasons why he was willing to go whenever God should call him to that world where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest, was wont to say: 'O my soul, thou shalt bid adieu to sin; thou shalt be freed from cares, and especially from the rage of controversialists; thou shalt enter into light; thou shalt see God; thou shalt behold also his Divine Son; thou shalt comprehend also those wonderful secrets which thou couldst not understand in the present life; thou shalt know why we are framed as we are; thou shalt learn also the mystical conformation of the Divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. The former part only I intended to quote, but the whole has trickled from my pen. This was acquaintance with God; this was true peace; and in the anticipation of it, he said with his dying lips, 'What want I? nothing, nothing but heaven.' Like that kindred spirit Hooker, he had learned to view not only the world, but, alas! the visible church of Christ 'made up of perturbations; and he had long been preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for that dreadful yet to him happy hour, when he should be translated to the presence of God. Like another eminent Christian, the celebrated Peter Du Moulin, he might say, 'O my God, how weary am I! When shall I rest in thy bosom? When shall I drink of the river of thy pleasures? I am unworthy of it, O my God; but thou art glorified by doing good to the unworthy. I am going to my Father and my God; I go to him with confidence; for he has arrayed me with the robe of his righteousness. Luther felt, thought, and spoke in the same manner; for though he was cast by Divine Providence in the midst of the battle, he was eminently a man of peace; and peace is the atmosphere of heaven, for 'God is love.'

"I ought in strict argument to cross my pen through all that I have been writing for the last quarter of an hour, for it has been but the effusion of a spirit wounded at beholding the strifes of the church; and fearful of adding to them, and your lordship's maxim and conversation, before alluded to, led me on: but let it stand, to remind the writer and the reader of that world where Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim; but all shall see eye to eye, and strife and discord shall be no more. With a lurid political atmosphere around us, a pestilential disease at our doors, and perhaps an offended Father looking down upon us; these are not the times for Christians to fall out by the way. It was hoped the Bible Society would have healed many wounds, and cemented many hearts; but the accuser of the brethren mourned over the spectacle, as he did over Adam and Eve caressing in Paradise, and he hurled the torch of discord among us. Let us not be ignorant of his devices, or yield to his temptations.

"And here, my lord, I do intreat, I do implore, I do most solemnly obtest, my reverend brethren who have been shaken in this matter,—some of them men to whom I am not worthy to be called a brother; at whose feet I would sit to learn lessons of heavenly sanctity, and whose lives cause me to blush and mourn as I look at my own sins, negligences, and ignorances—I would beseech them, for the love of Christ and the welfare of immortal souls, to pause, to re-consider, to linger long, before they lend themselves to this heart-rending schism. It may be, that they took up these pages with prejudice; it may be, that the faults of the writer have increased them: these let them pardon in the meekness of Christ; and then, having discarded all but their own secret strivings of heart, and the instruction of God's holy word and the teaching of his Spirit, let them ask if there be no fact, no argument, which fairly, calmly, candidly weighed, may prevent their unhappy secession."

Such were Mr. Wilks's feelings, statements, apologies, and entreaties upon the occasion; and that you, sir, who were acquainted with the discussions, did not consider him to be what your Secretary, so many years after, affirms, is to be inferred from his having subsequently received very kind and Christian letters from you on other subjects; and though he is a man whose character is so little "respectable" that a son of John Thelwall finds his disreputability a very convenient reason for not replying to an inconvenient question about reading the Prayer-book psalms from the Septuagint version; yet when he had occasion, three years ago, to make some researches in the valuable library of your venerable Inn of Court, (Lincoln's Inn) the recommendations of two Benchers being requisite for that privilege, the document which courteously recommended him happened casually, but very amicably, to have affixed to it the two signatures of "Bexley" and "T. Erskine;" the Presidents of the British and Foreign and the Trinitarian Bible Societies. If however it were possible that you could be swayed by Mr. Thelwall to believe Mr. Wilks to be a liar, slanderer, and all those other bad things, you are confidently referred to the Lord Bishop of the diocese of London, in which he has so long lived, to make what inquiries you think requisite. The recommendatory circular prefixed to the "New Series" of the Christian Observer, and signed by nearly forty names of noblemen, church-dignitaries, clergymen, and laymen, who would not act lightly in such a matter, proves that Mr. Thelwall's judgment, in regard to that periodical or its Editor, is not infallible.

But to the narrative. The Trinitarian Society being established, and the controversy having abated, the conductors of the Christian Observer, though they had opposed its formation, had no wish to disturb its operations, if it was willing to live peaceably with its neighbours. Not that it was so; for it has marked its proceedings by something too much like "Stand by; I am holier than thou;" and its Reports, and the speeches of many of its friends, have afforded many occasions for just reproof. Still it was left unassailed in 1833; in 1834; in 1835; in 1836; in 1837; and in 1838. Did this look like quarrelsomeness?

At length, in April 1839, the Trinitarian committee issued a "Report respecting certain versions of the Bible which are circulated by the British and Foreign Bible Society;" preceded by a circular signed "A.S. Thelwall; on behalf of the committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society." Here from the funds subscribed to pay for Bibles your Society published an attack—as invidious in spirit as it was feeble in argument—upon another institution, which was peacefully pursuing its Gospel labours, without ever having wasted a word or a penny in attacking you; and the motive which Mr. Thelwall in an unguarded moment betrayed, was that "British Christians" would not have thought your report "a matter of any interest and concern," if it had not been spiced with the piquant heading about the Bible Society. This is another illustration of Mr. Melvill's remark about your Society's addiction to picking holes in other men's coats instead of doing its own business—that is, mending its own. What would be said if any other Society—say the Christian Knowledge—were to act thus; making animadversions upon other institutions, and prefixing to them the significant hint, as in the circular to your Report, that all these evils will be remedied, if "British Christians" will only transfer their money from other societies to yours; in order "to substitute in due time faithful versions, made from the original Hebrew and Greek." Alas! from 1831 to 1840, not one version is forthcoming, or in forward progress; and if there were a score, still "British Christians" would have no great confidence in the pre-eminent excellency of

versions made under the superintendence of Mr. Thelwall and Mr. Boys ; and would much rather prefer those made under the auspices of the Christian Knowledge Society, or the Bible Society.

Yet even this unprovoked and invidious attack upon another Society, with a view to bring money to its own coffers, the Editor of the *Christian Observer*, not wishing to foment strife, passed by ; nor did he so much as allude to the subject in May, or June, or July ; thus doing injustice to an excellent cause, and to some admirable addresses, and forcible arguments ; as, for instance, the speech of the Bishop of Winchester ; whom your Chairman, Captain V. Harcourt, accused of having uttered what he would not, if he had risen from his knees in prayer, as he and his colleagues had done. Well did that kind-hearted though unhappily Irvingitish man, Lieutenant Rhind, remark, in his speech at the formation of your Society, with too accurate a prescience, that, " The thing which we should most strongly strive to guard against, as I believe it will be the temptation of the devil on our new Society, is to say, Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou ; and if encouraged, it will be a canker-worm which shall eat in and destroy it." Alas ! it has done so.

At length, sir, in August and September, a letter from a pious and amiable lay correspondent was admitted ; to which notes were appended by the Editor ; and you shall now hear what caused that late and reluctant allusion to your Society's attack upon the Bible Society. This will be best explained by the following note written by that gentleman to the Editor. Mr. Thelwall having spoken of the " wilful falsehood," of " an anonymous correspondent," the Editor wrote to know if his lay-friend would object to his name being made known, to which he replied as follows :

50, Green Street, Park Lane, 3rd January, 1840.

Dear Sir,—My opinion of the Bible Society question, from the first, was the same as your own, and so it remains to this present day, except that I am more confirmed in it upon abstract principle, setting aside all personalities. I have thus expressed myself times without number, in conversation, by letter, and at last through the press ; to which latter expedient I should not have resorted, *had there been any other mode of ridding myself of such continual importunities on the part of some of its members to make me a member of it.* Both during and since your discussion of the subject in the *Christian Observer*, I have corresponded with the Honorary and Lay Secretaries in civil, gentlemanlike, and respectful terms, signifying to them in other words the purport of this communication to you, *giving them my name, and stating to them that I was a public correspondent of your own.* Since the publication of Mr. Thelwall's last pamphlet, I have also privately addressed him to the same effect, only adding a quotation from Jonathan Edwards on the Septuagint version ; and representing to Mr. Thelwall, without at all reproaching his character as a minister, his total incompetency for the labour of biblical criticism. I do not see that you have any reason to blame yourself, or to be blamed, for having fairly and forcibly argued the subject ; for the Trinitarian Society having put forth, in the first instance, a printed statement of their own, *their aggressive attack required to be repelled* ; and so far as I have been myself implicated in it, which need not to have been the case, I am much obliged to you for having acquitted yourself to my satisfaction.

I remain, Dear Sir, yours faithfully,

FREDERICK SARGENT.

You will see, sir, by this letter, that so far from the *Christian Observer's* "perseveringly" attacking your Society, it only yielded at last, (after having held back for many years, and under great provocations,) in order to allow one of the many " British Christians" who are so "perseveringly" beset by some of your members "to rid himself of such continual importunities," by disburdening his own mind, and strengthening his brethren. Mr. Wilks perhaps acted wrong in

this long abstinence from conflict ; but he at least studied " the things that make for peace," and proved that he was not " an enemy, persecutor, slanderer," full of " rancour," and perseveringly breathing out " calumnies."

Astonished, sir, as every person who read Mr. Thelwall's Letter was at the extraordinary language in which it is couched, Mr. Wilks would never have descended to hold any parley with a person who accuses him of lying, slandering, calumny, and the rest. If he was, or is yet, to have any concern with Mr. Thelwall in the matter, it could only be through the medium of twelve honest men sworn to deliver a true verdict ; or by making oath that he is the person meant, and purging himself of the things laid to his charge, and obliging the accuser to substantiate them if he can, your Lordship perhaps being the judge called upon to decide whether, or how far, the accusations are libellous, and how far they are only vulgar abuse, ill becoming a clergyman, whatever Mr. Stanley may think of them as a gentleman ; or however he may consider, as a Christian, that they are calculated to promote " the sacred cause of God."

But Mr. Thelwall is not an isolated person. He is the accredited paid agent of the Trinitarian Bible Society ; and your Report of 1836, expressly stated, previously to his election, that, in the hope " of more extensively spreading the principles of the Society, and of enlarging the sphere of its operations, your committee passed a resolution to appoint a minister of the Gospel, at an adequate salary, whose entire time shall be devoted, under the Lord's blessing, to these objects." The attack upon the British and Foreign Bible Society was expressly signed by him, " On behalf of the Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society." His Letter to Mr. Stanley was a rejoinder to the Christian Observer's remarks upon that attack, and was in sequence to his former pamphlet ; all being intended, in his official character, " to spread the principles of the Society." In the Letter, as in the Report, he speaks as your Secretary, saying, " We," " Us ;" " Our Reports," &c. " Our Committee," &c. though had he not done so, the documents drawn up and issued by the paid Secretary of a Society, with his name, are always, and justly, considered official ; nor would a committee permit its secretary to contravene its directions.

This then materially alters the case. What no man who knows Mr. Thelwall's habits of speaking and writing, would personally heed, as if it carried any weight with it, is not to be despised if it goes forth to the world under the sanction, and is circulated by the agency, and is aided by the influence, of one of the Judges of the land, and a long list of office-bearers in a " Trinitarian Bible Society," especially a Society which spends a very large proportion of its funds in management and agency. No charge, sir, is intended against yourself, except that of allowing your name to give public sanction to what you are either not cognizant of, or if cognizant of, do not approve. The same apology is most sincerely tendered for others similarly circumstanced. The following is the list of officers, as printed in the last Report.

PRESIDENT,

The Right Honourable Mr. Justice Erskine.

VICE PRESIDENTS,

The Right Honourable Earl Mountcashell.

The Right Honourable Lord Viscount Lorton.

TREASURER,

John Labouchere, Esq.

The Rev. G. Washington Philips, *Honorary Clerical Secretary.*

H. Curwen Christian, Esq. *Honorary Lay Secretary.*

COMMITTEE.

The Rev. H. H. Beamish.
 The Rev. J. C. Burns.
 The Rev. J. Cumming.
 The Rev. J. L. Galton.
 The Rev. J. Garwood.
 The Rev. P. Hall.
 The Rev. P. M'Morland.
 The Rev. J. R. Page.
 The Rev. F. Silver.
 The Rev. J. F. Witty.
 Mr. Aston.
 Captain Cotton, R.A.
 Mr. Cummins.
 Mr. Forman.
 Mr. Gabriel.

Mr. Gillespie.
 Mr. Graham.
 Mr. Habershon.
 Mr. Hamilton.
 Honourable J. King.
 General Latter.
 Mr. Melvill.
 Mr. Nattali.
 Mr. Nisbet.
 Captain Peevor.
 Mr. R. Pope.
 Mr. F. Sandoz.
 Mr. J. W. Smith.
 Mr. H. Thompson.
 Mr. Wild.

SECRETARY.

The Rev. A. S. Thelwall, M.A.

SUPERINTENDENT OF FOREIGN TRANSLATIONS.

Rev. Thomas Boys, M. A.

But though it might seem to be affectation for a Society to shrink from the avowal of its paid (and still retained and unrebuked) Secretary's agency, yet so desirous was Mr. Wilks of avoiding altercation, that he would have been willing, even under these circumstances, to admit of an official disclaimer, had it been promptly and honourably rendered. He accordingly, as soon as he had seen your Secretary's Letter, called at the office of your Society, No. 11 Exeter Hall, taking with him Mr. Eland, the Secretary of the Lord's Day Society, who happened to be in that Society's office in the next room. The following is Mr. Eland's account of what occurred upon the occasion :

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

12 Exeter Hall, 8th January, 1840.

My dear Sir,—I knew nothing of the matter upon which you wished to speak with Mr. Christian, the Honorary Lay Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, when you asked me to go into the room with you. As far as I can recollect the conversation, it was to the following effect. There were in the room Mr. Christian, the Rev. A. S. Thelwall, and two other gentlemen. You shewed Mr. Christian a pamphlet, and asked whether that pamphlet respecting you was published under the sanction of his Committee, or Society: he replied, "Why, you know, Mr. Wilks, it is usual to go to the booksellers in such cases. Why do you come here? why do you not go to the publishers?" You then said, "Do you mean to say that your Society, then, disclaims it?" Upon which he repeated, "I told you that you must go to the booksellers." You then asked, "Do you then adopt it?" He still referred you to the booksellers. Upon your asking whom you were to look to as the responsible parties, he did not refer you to Mr. Thelwall, who heard all that passed, but made no remark. In conclusion, you requested Mr. Christian to remember, in order that there might be no future mistake, that you had used no virulence of speech: that you had not uttered one word respecting the pamphlet, that you had confined yourself to the simple question, "did his Committee disclaim it," which he had refused to answer; and that as he declined voluntarily answering it, you might be forced to place him in a position in which he would be obliged to do so upon oath, and to bring his books and vouchers with him. He quitted the room, and the interview ended.

I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

JOHN BAKER ELAND.

Now, sir, you, who though President of the Society probably know very little of the manner in which Mr. Thelwall and his colleagues manage the detail of its affairs, may justly be surprised that your Honorary Secretary was at a loss for an answer. Might he not have said, that his Society was a Bible Society,

not a Pamphlet Society ; and that its committee disclaimed all pamphlets whatsoever ; and Mr. Thelwall's in particular ? No, sir, he knew too well how much of your subscribers' money has been appropriated to the issue of controversial pamphlets ; and he knew too well the relation in which your Secretary stands to the Society, as its paid pamphlet writer, to venture upon any such broad or special disclaimer. He found that silence and abruptly quitting the office were the most convenient resource.

If, sir, you were an unscrupulous man of the world, instead of a gentleman of the nicest and most honourable feelings, and what is far more, a faithful and affectionate servant of Jesus Christ, you might smile at Mr. Wilks's simplicity in supposing that Mr. Christian would make any inconvenient admissions. When it had been so adroitly contrived to speak only of "The Editor of the Christian Observer," without mentioning Mr. Wilks's name, though no person doubted who was meant, could it be supposed (a crafty man would say) that the Honorary Secretary of the Society would dove-tail the proof, by admitting, though he well knew, that Mr. Wilks was the person concerned ? Or was it likely that Mr. Thelwall would volunteer such an admission till it was ascertained, by "legal advice" (as the friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society at Bath, who are sedulously circulating the pamphlet, have discreetly taken the precaution of doing), whether your Society in this publication has steered so nicely in its attacks upon private character, by *inuendos* and other wary devices, that it may be circulated without subjecting the author or publisher to ignominious punishment. Or was Mr. Christian to admit what, in connexion with other speeches and writings, might possibly subject several persons to a charge of conspiring to defame and ruin an individual who had offended them ? It was discreet to relegate Mr. Wilks to the booksellers ; for they could only refer to the writer, but not fill up the *inuendos*.

Thus might an unscrupulous man of the world argue ; but from a religious Society a plain Yes or No might have been expected. Mr. Christian ought either to have said, "We disclaim it ; we have nothing to do with it ;" or "We acknowledge it ; it is written by our accredited officer ; we are widely circulating it throughout the country ; we admit that Mr. Wilks is the person who is entitled a 'slanderer,' and so forth ; and we are prepared to take the consequences, both moral and legal." Mr. Wilks had brought no charge against the pamphlet ; he had made no remark upon it ; so that Mr. Christian's conduct arose only from his own secret consciousness.

If it should be said, now that the affair has taken so awkward a turn, that the committee had deliberated upon the pamphlet, and decided not to publish it ; this would make their conduct still worse : for, *first*, it would be an admission that instead of confining themselves to their work, as publishers of Bibles, they entertain the question of publishing pamphlets ; and, *secondly*, that they allowed the pamphlet to have all the effect of an official publication ; while by a secret resolution they left an opening for escaping, if need were, from responsibility, and throwing the burden upon their paid, accredited, unrebuked, highly-lauded, and not cashiered Secretary.

Thus repulsed from your office, Mr. Wilks went to the publishers. It was an odd errand to go upon ; he was to ask booksellers whether what they had published under the name of your Secretary was a document of your Society (for that had been his *only* question), a question your own officers had declined answering. Nevertheless he went. The booksellers of course referred him to your Secretary. He replied that he had been to your office, and inquired of your Honorary Lay Secretary, in presence of your Clerical Secretary, Mr. Thelwall ; but that he was officially directed to apply to the publishers. Thereupon they, one and all, in

the most straightforward, upright, and perhaps prudent manner, shrunk from having any thing further to do with the publication. The first firm on the title page is "Seeley and Son." There is no such firm. Mr. Seeley, the father, has been long dead; but Mr. Wilks applied to the eldest son, Mr. Robert Seeley, who said that the pamphlet was not published by his house, and that he knew nothing of it. The next application was to the respectable firm of L. & G. Seeley, from whom Mr. Wilks received the following replies; of course with permission to publish them.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

Fleet Street, December 24, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—We regret that we should inadvertently become the medium of publishing a pamphlet which you consider designed as a personal attack upon yourself. The pamphlet in question was brought to us by the Rev. Mr. Thelwall, with a request that we would allow our names to be affixed to it; to which, having published for that gentleman before, and considering his name a sufficient guarantee for its contents, we consented. The writer of this being at the time very unwell, and his time fully occupied with other matters of business, did not examine its contents, and had no suspicion of its containing anything personally offensive to any one. We are, Rev. Sir, your faithful and obedient servants,

L. and G. SEELEY.

Fleet Street, December 27, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—In reply to your inquiry I beg to inform you, that immediately after the receipt of your note on Tuesday last, I desired the remaining copies of "The Appeal to Truth" to be returned to the printer, and yesterday wrote to Mr. Thelwall, requesting him to omit our names from all future advertisements, to which note I have since received one from him acquiescing in my request.

I am, Rev. Sir, yours respectfully,
G. SEELEY.

Fleet Street, December 29, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—We have not sent out a single advertisement of the "Appeal to Truth," nor do we know to whom they have been sent. I have taken care to strike out our name from the advertisement in the *Missionary Register*, which we publish; and I requested Mr. Thelwall to omit our names from all that he might issue. I do not know that we have any right to ask Mr. Thelwall where he intends advertising; and it would be making rather too much parade of the matter to send notices to all the periodicals; so that I do not know what further we can do to meet your wishes, which we shall be happy to do as far as is in our power, if you will inform us in what manner we can do so.

I am, Rev. Sir, yours respectfully,
G. SEELEY.

The Advertisement having appeared in the *Missionary Register*, the following letters were sent to Mr. Wilks by Mr. Seeley the publisher, and that venerable father of *Missionary* and other Christian labours, the Rev. Josiah Pratt, the Editor.

Fleet-street, Dec. 31, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—If you refer to my note, I think you will find that it was only *our name* which I said would not appear in Mr. Thelwall's advertisement in the *Missionary Register*—neither does it. The advertisement itself I do not consider I had any right to exclude without the Editor's directions to that effect.

I am, Rev. Sir, yours respectfully,
G. SEELEY.

15 Finsbury Circus, 3d January, 1840.

My dear Friend,—I am much concerned to find that any thing connected with the *Missionary Register* should have added to the anxieties which press upon you in the midst of your labours. The circumstances which attended the advertisement on the wrapper of the last Number were unknown to me. The printer receives

from the publisher, in whom I place confidence, such advertisements as he sends. In the present case he considered the withdrawal of his own name, as publisher of the pamphlet, to be all that you required. I knew not that such an advertisement was on the wrapper till I saw it there. I should have thought it a duty to the writer himself to decline lending any aid to the circulation of his pamphlet ; and a duty to yourself to prevent, as far as lay in my power, any such painful hindrance to you in your toil.—I am ever, my dear friend, faithfully and affectionately yours,

JOSIAH PRATT.

Thus amicably ended the affair with Messrs. Seeley. The next publishers' name on the title-page was Nisbet and Co., on whom Mr. Wilks called ; when Mr. Nisbet's partner, Mr. Murray, assured him that he knew nothing whatever of the publication, much less that the name of their house was affixed to it ; and upon being shewn certain passages in it, expressed in the most honourable manner his indignation, and assured Mr. Wilks that their house would have nothing more to do with it ; and that a written declaration to that effect should be sent to Mr. Wilks, with liberty to publish it. You will find, sir, a few pages onward, a mournful sequel to this business, which brings Mr. Thelwall's pamphlet still closer home to your committee, Mr. Nisbet being a very influential member of it ; but for the present let this firm have the credit of Mr. Murray's declaration and intention.

The next house is that of Wertheim, Paternoster Row. Mr. Wertheim's answer is as follows :

14, Paternoster Row.

Rev. Sir,—I beg to state, in reply to your notice of yesterday, that I shall not sell another copy of Mr. Thelwall's pamphlet, which will be returned to him ; and I regret having been made unconsciously the means of disseminating any thing of a slanderous character to yourself.—Believe me, Rev. Sir, yours respectfully,
Dec. 28, 1839.

B. WERTHEIM.

The last publishers on the title-page are " Goodwin and Binns," Bath, where Mr. Stanley is so " perseveringly" aiding what he considers to be " the sacred cause of God," by upholding with " all his sympathies" your Secretary's unjustifiable attack upon private character. There is no such firm, the partners being transposed ; which, as well as the mistake of Seeley and Sons, shews how little those respectable houses knew of the pamphlet. The printer's name is not on the first leaf, or the first sheet ; which being mentioned to him, he said that by a recent Act of Parliament no person, without the Attorney-General's permission, can trouble a printer for such an omission ; but being reminded that the Act was passed only to prevent vexatious proceedings about ordinary cards, circulars, and the like ; and that, where the contents of a publication were called in question, the Attorney-General would grant his signature as a matter of course, more especially if two firms were incorrectly referred to, he admitted this ; and he also, like the other tradesmen, sent Mr. Wilks a handsome written apology (for publication if required) expressing his sorrow, and referring of course to Mr. Thelwall for satisfaction in the matter. The following are Messrs. Binns and Goodwin's letters.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

Bath, Dec. 28, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 26th, we beg to inform you that we immediately waited upon the gentlemen who invited us to publish the " Appeal to Truth," and upon whom we relied and placed the greatest confidence, being gentlemen of piety and the first respectability in Bath ; supposing as we did (without a perusal) that it might be simply a reply in the ordinary way of controversy, not in

the least anticipating anything of an acrimonious or calumnious character, as you seem to attribute.

We beg, Rev. Sir, to thank you for the kind and considerate manner you have written to us; and shall certainly be extremely averse to anything that will oppose your wishes. But really we see no reason why we should be written to, not having even seen the Letter (and that *anonymous* too), and much less knowing you were the gentleman; therefore we could not be said to have any allusion to yourself. We ~~MUCH OBJECT TO ANYTHING~~ of a PARTY nature, but never for a moment supposed, in a controversy upon *such a subject*, there would be an objectionable spirit evinced; but hoped it might, as other investigations, only lead to a closer and more vigilant inquiry into truth. We earnestly wish all our publications to be such as will tend to benefit our readers, and to maintain the same respectable standing they have now done for nearly 70 years in the estimation of the religious world, and as will continue to retain their fullest confidence. You ask us to suppress the sale. We have suspended it and the advertisements; but you must be aware that *the gentlemen, acting under legal advice, and perfect satisfaction that they cannot be legally prevented*, and have not the slightest cause for apprehension, will suffer it to be suppressed; and then if we would not dispose of them, other booksellers or persons would be appointed, and after such an ordeal, rather than diminish, the sale would probably be increased. Not having investigated the point at issue between the British and Foreign and Trinitarian Bible Society, we feel a mutual respect for both, and are truly grieved at any cause for dissension, and trust it will shortly cease, and Christians be united hand-in-hand in the one glorious cause of extending the kingdom of Christ.

We are resolved not to exert ourselves in the sale of anything that may only tend to divide rather than unite the Christian world; and trust, Rev. Sir, you will be satisfied with this expression of our feelings.

We are, Rev. Sir, yours very respectfully,

BINNS AND GOODWIN.

This letter was candid and obliging, but not satisfactory; but the very next day (Sunday being no day for secular business) Messrs. Binns and Goodwin sent Mr. Wilks the following letter; either having ascertained that the "legal advice" under which the Bath Trinitarian Society gentlemen were so warily acting, was not to be relied upon; or ashamed that, in order to promote the glory of God, the members of a religious Society should feel it necessary to "act under legal advice" at all, to discover how far they might injure their neighbour's character without being "legally prevented."

Bath, Dec. 30, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—We now write expressive of our deep regret that we have stood in the unpleasant and unwelcome situation of being the only party not acceding to your request; but we hope you will be ready to enter into our feelings, when we explain to you that the gentlemen who instigated us are those who by their influence are able very much to promote our interest in business; so that had we immediately determined to oppose their wishes (although gentlemen of kindness and consideration), yet we might ultimately have been the innocent and unwilling sufferers; although, had we fully concurred in our own desire to oblige you and to disconnect ourselves with an alteration so painful, we should have at once declined; desiring, as we have said before, to be neuter in all party subjects of the day, and to be publishers of such works only as will at once lead more to establish a deserving reputation and confidence so long enjoyed. *We beg to state that we have entirely suppressed the sale, and very few have been sold, not having (as we are aware of) yet been advertised; we have stopped the advertisements proposed, and have returned every copy, and now disclaim from this date any further connection with the pamphlet, and will no longer hold ourselves amenable, as should there be any further transactions they will be independent of us.* We trust, in Christian forbearance, you will not impute to us anything offensive to yourself, being very far from our intention; and we hope we shall still enjoy your kind feeling and interest.

We are, Rev. Sir, yours very respectfully,

BINNS AND GOODWIN.

Your Secretary's pamphlet was thus left upon hand, the several publishers disclaiming it; and an apology being thought necessary even for the

inadvertent admission of an advertisement of it upon the cover of a magazine. Among other publishers your Secretary sent his advertisement to the respectable firm of Hatchard and Son, who returned the money; upon which he addressed them as follows:

To Messrs. Hatchard and Son, 187 Piccadilly.

Exeter, Jan. 3, 1840.

Gentlemen,—You have published *gross, false, and unprovoked libels upon me*, in the “Christian Observer” for August and September last; you have re-published those in a separate pamphlet, entitled “The ‘Trinitarian’ and British and Foreign Bible Societies. Reprinted from the ‘Christian Observer’ for August and September, 1839.” I might at once have taken legal proceedings against you for so doing. I deemed it a more manly and Christian course to publish a refutation of the pamphlet in question; and now I find that you refuse to insert my advertisement on the cover of the “Christian Observer,” thus depriving me of the only direct method of making known, in the quarter in which the injury was done me, that a reply has been written.

Under these extraordinary circumstances I can only expect of you, that, in common justice and fairness, you will for the future refuse to supply any further either those numbers of the “Christian Observer” in which I am so wantonly assailed, or any re-publication of those attacks. In short, that you will either cease to be publishers of libels upon me, or, at least, afford me the usual opportunities of making known the contradiction.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

A. S. THELWALL.

Messrs. Hatchard, in reply, requested Mr. Thelwall to point out the passages which contained “gross, false, and unprovoked libels” upon him; for which he “might have taken legal proceedings” against them; adding that a general assertion without specification was of no weight; and that they were quite sure (for they did not affect to be ignorant of what they had published) that there was nothing which either they or the writers had any reason to be afraid or ashamed of. To this request your Secretary has never ventured to offer one syllable of reply. He well knew that Messrs. Hatchard had not only not published any “gross, false, and unprovoked libel” on him, for which he might (and possibly would, if he could) have prosecuted them; but that there is not—and you, sir, are most respectfully invited to ascertain the fact—one word that could even be called offensively personal. You will have no hesitation in affixing to your Secretary’s letter to Messrs. Hatchard its legal designation; and as it is technically published by him, Messrs. Hatchards may perhaps be advised to make him prove his words if he can. You cannot, sir, expect that because your Committee, “with a view to spread more extensively the principles of the Trinitarian Bible Society,” are pleased to keep in their pay a Secretary, whose habits and temper lead him to write in this manner, that persons not belonging to your Society will any longer submit to such treatment, under the plea that it is all to further “the sacred cause of God.”

And now, sir, lest after all it should be said that your Secretary is not comforted and abetted in this matter by his colleagues in office, or by the Trinitarian Society, another class of facts must be laid before you. From these you will discover, with grief and amazement, how completely your Society is dove-tailed with your Secretary’s performance.

You have seen the virtuous indignation—or, if you prefer it, the legal fears—with which so many respectable tradesmen refused to have anything to do with your Secretary’s pamphlet. Not less sensitive than the rest was Mr. Murray, the partner of Mr. Nisbet; but alas! Mr. Nisbet is one of the founders of your Society, and a most zealous member of your Committee; and, like Mr. Stanley, all his sympathies being on one side, he has allowed his predilection for his party

to turn him from his plain duty as a Christian and a tradesman ; as the following correspondence will shew.

To Messrs. Nisbet and Murray.

" St. John's Wood Road, Dec. 30, 1839.

Gentlemen,—I am surprised that you have delayed informing me, in writing, that you had immediately done as Mr. Murray promised—namely, directed your names to be taken off the title-page and the advertisements of a pamphlet in which I am charged with " misrepresentations," " slanders," making " assertions false and groundless," " calumny," " rancour," " acting perseveringly the part of an enemy, persecutor, and slanderer," using " infidel sort of reasoning," supporting a cause " which he is conscious can only be maintained by downright falsehoods ;" " a man whose Protestantism is of a very questionable character, who may be considered as a semi-advocate of popery ;" " a tissue of ignorance, misrepresentation, and falsehood ;" disgracing himself and the cause of the Gospel ;" and " uttering more falsehoods in six lines than I (the Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society) can refute in so many pages."

I am, Gentlemen, your affectionate friend and servant,

S. C. WILKS.

This letter, addressed to Messrs. Nisbet and Murray, was answered by the Trinitarian Society partner as follows ; apparently much to the vexation of Mr. Murray.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

21, Berners Street, Dec. 31, 1839.

Rev. Sir,—I have transmitted your letter to the author, as our usual way in cases of this kind. We can have no desire to injure any one ; but when we are applied to by respectable men, and clergymen, such as we have held you and Mr. Thelwall to be, we at once allow our names to their pamphlets ; and it is most unusual to apply to the booksellers when you have the author to deal with.

I am, Rev. Sir, yours respectfully,

JAMES NISBET.

Upon the law and the morality of Mr. Nisbet's letter a word hereafter ; but to complete the facts the following letter from Mr. Wilks to Mr. Murray is added.

St. John's Wood Road, Dec. 31, 1839.

Sir,—On the 28th inst. I called at your library, and shewed you Mr. Thelwall's letter to Mr. Stanley, and pointed out certain passages which I complained of ; upon looking at which you expressed great astonishment and regret that the name of your house should be affixed to such a publication. You stated that no authority had been given for affixing it, unless your partner Mr. Nisbet had given permission without your knowing it ; but that, now you had seen the pamphlet, you would have nothing whatever to do with it, and would give me a satisfactory written declaration to that effect. Whereupon, as I was writing to a friend, I asked you for ink and paper ; and added a postscript, as you saw me doing, stating what you had said, and sent it off by that night's post. As I was leaving the library, you told me your partner had just returned home ; but I replied that I was perfectly satisfied with your own declaration and promise, and you could tell him yourself what had passed, without my going over the matter again.

I request therefore to know, addressing you as a Christian man, and an honourable tradesman, why your pledge is violated, by the letter which I have received from Mr. Nisbet, refusing to do what you promised should be done ? I think there were those within hearing who could remind you of the words you used, and whose testimony may be useful if you have forgotten them ; but I am altogether unwilling to think you mean to break your word. Mr. Nisbet, when he wrote, might not know of your positive engagement.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

S. C. WILKS.

To this letter no answer has been returned ; nor has the slightest attempt been made to shew—Mr. Murray was too honourable to wish it—that the

pledge had not been fully and unequivocally given; or that Mr. Nisbet, the Trinitarian Society committee-man, had not broken the solemn promise made by his house in its secular capacity. But three days after (Jan. 3.) Mr. Murray called on Mr. Wilks in evident anxiety, and said that he wished to make a communication. Mr. Wilks replied, that as his firm had published that he was a slanderer, and a man who could write more deliberate falsehoods in six lines than Mr. Nisbet's Trinitarian Society friends could correct in six pages, all communication must be in writing; and that if Mr. Murray would write down what he wished to state, Mr. Wilks would write down his reply. Mr. Murray in great anxiety said that he could not write anything; he wished to communicate verbally. He was evidently in a cruel case, between his feelings as a man of veracity and Christian integrity, and his connexion as junior partner with a committee-man determined to support what he considered "the sacred cause of God" by the publication of Trinitarian Society pamphlets. After much entreaty to be permitted to make an oral statement, which Mr. Wilks declined hearing, they parted with mutual good-will.

Here then, sir, you again see the pertinacity with which your members cling to your Secretary's pamphlet. As to Mr. Nisbet's letter, if you were addressing him in another place you would perhaps speak to the following effect:—"Mr. Nisbet, you have greatly aggravated your offence by your plea, which is bad law and worse morality. It is bad law; for a bookseller is personally responsible for what he publishes; and his giving up the name of the author does not set aside that responsibility; nor ought it; for if there were no publishers there would be no authors, and society has a just right to make publishers feel it to be their interest as well as their duty to exercise strict caution as to what they allow themselves to be the vehicle of sending abroad into the world. Still, if after exercising all reasonable care, they are betrayed by ignorance, mistake, or confidence in the character of a writer, to publish libellous matter, though they are not legally justified, yet upon a due expression of sorrow, as soon as they are apprised of their offence, and making all the reparation in their power, by giving up the name of the writer, and ceasing from further publication, courts and juries will deal leniently by them; and in the case of a newspaper, or other periodical work, which is issued once for all, this is often the utmost that a publisher, however willing, can do, for he cannot recall the past. But very different is the case of a work in a course of continuous publication. Every copy issued involves a new offence; and if, after being cautioned the vendor obstinately persists in circulating a libel, he makes no reparation to the injured party by giving up the name of the author; he is now knowingly and advisedly responsible, and under the greatest possible aggravation. In the present case there was nothing to give up; for the authorship was not denied: you were not asked for the name of the writer; but were warned not to continue to sell the book; but you persisted in so doing.

"But you say that it is not usual to apply to the bookseller when the author may be dealt with. If it be not, it is merely because a bookseller, being duly warned, usually, for his own sake, attends to the warning, and refuses to be any longer a party in the wrong-doing. But you greatly mistake in saying that where the bookseller persists in the publication it is not usual to make him a party; it is the constant course; and very properly and necessarily, for the author may be only the bookseller's agent; or he may be in a foreign land; or he may have parted with the copy-right and not be able to suppress the publication; or he may choose to persist in circulating a libel which the injured party considers it his duty to suppress; but which cannot be done promptly except through the publisher.

"There is also another aggravating feature in your offence. You are a member of the Trinitarian Society Committee, of which the author is the paid agent; so that you cannot plead that you stand on the neutral ground of a publisher. You are a party in the affair, and are carrying out, as a bookseller, what you are connected with as a committee-man; and you did this after you were apprised that all the other publishers, and even your own partner, had washed their hands of the pamphlet; thus shewing that you were not acting as a neutral tradesman but as a partizan.

"So much for the law of the question; and the morality goes step by step with the law. The measure of moral blame might be small at first; it might amount only to your placing undue confidence in Mr. Thelwall; but to persist, after being acquainted with the facts, in publishing respecting a clergyman of unimpeachable character, and whom you yourself admit, in your letter, to be 'respectable,' that he is a slanderer, a wilful habitual falsifier, and much more that, besides its legal bearing, as directed against Mr. Wilks in his private and his clerical character, is offensive and abusive, involves aggravated moral as well legal guilt; and if you did so hoping to serve a religious institution of which you are an officer, either the institution requires very exceptionable advocacy, or you are a very injudicious advocate.

"You say that you have no design to injure any one in what you publish; but suppose it admitted that you had originally no such design in the present instance, yet when you were informed that injury was being inflicted, if you persevered in repeating it, as often as any person came into your shop, and offered you fourpence to do so, the infliction became wilful and advised. In every way therefore, both morally and legally, you have placed yourself in the worst possible position; and your referring the aggrieved party to the wrong-doer, when he complained of your aiding his wrong-doing, was, to say the least, too like a studied insult." *

But there is yet another and more painful correspondence; that with Mr. Stanley. To cut short all intermission, and that there might be nothing private—nothing but what either party might publish if he saw fit—Mr. Wilks addressed Mr. Stanley, officially as "President of the Bath Auxiliary Trinitarian Bible Society," signing himself, not only with his name, but as "Editor of the Christian Observer," as that was the title under which Mr. Stanley had made himself

* Months after the substance of this Statement was drawn up, there has just appeared (April 1840) a most extraordinary advertisement, which to an ingenuous mind like that of Mr. Justice Erskine will not be lost, while it adds another dove-tail of connexion between the Trinitarian Society and its Secretary's attack upon private character. The advertisement is as follows:

"This day was published, price 4d., or twenty-five for 5s. An Appeal to Truth; or Strictures on some Attacks recently made upon the Trinitarian Bible Society, by T. H. and the Christian Observer: in a Letter, addressed to Arthur Stanley, Esq., President of the Bath Auxiliary Trinitarian Bible Society. By the Rev. A. S. Thelwall, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge."

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."—Prov. xviii. 17.

"London: Nisbet and Co., Berners-street; and Nattali, Southampton-street, Strand."

Surely, sir, you will say that the pamphlet "*this day published*" in April 1840, by "Nisbet and Co." and "Nattali," is not the old pamphlet published more than four months before, by four most respectable houses, three of which, and the non-Trinitarian Society partner of the fourth, declared they would have nothing to do with it, when they learned its character. Yes, sir, it is the identical pamphlet; and not only is there what your Secretary might call a "downright falsehood" in the "*this day*

responsible for what your Secretary had written. The following is the correspondence.

To Arthur Stanley, Esquire, President of the Bath Auxiliary Trinitarian Bible Society, Bath.

St. John's Wood Road, Regent's Park, Dec. 30, 1839.

Sir,—A pamphlet having been published in the form of a Letter to you, beginning "My dear Friend," and ending "Yours faithfully in the bonds of the Gospel, Algernon Sydney Thelwall," in which I am much spoken of, I respectfully request you to inform me, as a Christian—and saying this, I need not add as a gentleman—whether you were cognisant of the contents of that letter before you allowed it to be published; and if not, whether you instantly directed your name to be expunged from it upon becoming acquainted with its character.

As it is only necessary to say Yes or No, I hope it will meet your convenience to favour me with a reply by return of post.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
SAMUEL CHARLES WILKS,

For twenty-three years Editor of the Christian Observer.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

9 Great Bedford Street, Bath, Dec. 31, 1839.

Sir,—I have no hesitation in giving a concise answer to your letter of the 30th instant, though not in the terms of "Yes or No," which you are pleased to prescribe to me.

Mr. Thelwall's pamphlet, in reply to the personal attacks of "The Christian Observer," as well as of the writer signed "T.H.," originated, I doubt not, in my invitation to him to answer the latter anonymous author. Nevertheless I must readily admit that the unfounded statements of the Editor of the periodical in question as imperatively challenged Mr. Thelwall's reply and rebuke, as the sneers and taunts of "T.H." In volunteering to make these remarks, I cannot refrain from adding that it is far from my wish that, in answering your attacks on an institution I cordially admire and approve, Mr. Thelwall, its able, and, as I humbly think, its unanswerable advocate, should have wounded your feelings.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,
ARTHUR STANLEY.

To Arthur Stanley, Esq., President of the Trinitarian Bible Society, Bath.

St. John's Wood Road, Regent's Park, January 2, 1840.

Sir,—I am sorry you took as uncourteous what I meant for courtesy. I did not "prescribe" to you (as you have apprehended) that you should answer "Yes or No;" for I should not think of "prescribing" to any gentleman how he should answer a question; or suppose that he was intentionally discourteous. I do not suppose that you intended me any discourtesy in omitting both at the commencement and the conclusion of your letter the usual prefix of a stranger in addressing a clergyman. What I meant by saying that it was not necessary to give you the trouble to write more than Yes or No, if you would do me that favour, was to express that I did not presume to ask you to enter into any details of your private opinion respecting the contents of the pamphlet, which I thought might have been addressed to you without your having first read it; and I trusted, for your own sake, that after duly considering its character—I will not say legally, but morally—you would be able to state, and would be glad of the opportunity of so

was published," as if nothing had before happened, but upon procuring a copy it turns out to be the very same impression, with the suppressed names still upon it, and *without the name of Nattali*. And who is "Nattali of Southampton street?" Where are the Longmans, the Rivingtons, the Hamiltons, the Parkers, and a dozen other well-known publishers? Would none of them take up what several other respectable firms had rejected? "Southampton street" is rather an out-of-the-way place to find a publisher; and who is Signor Nattali? As a publisher he may not be much known; but *he is a member of the Committee of your Society*; he is Mr. Nisbet's colleague, and one of Mr. Thelwall's employers!!! The motto from Proverbs xviii. 17, is more appropriate to the present examination than to Mr. Thelwall's letter.

doing, that you had instantly disclaimed all connexion with it. This is what I meant; but if the words seemed abrupt, I sincerely beg pardon; I could not intend any discourtesy.

Your letter, however, officially informs me that the President of the Bath Auxiliary Trinitarian Bible Society (legal advice having first been taken as to whether the remarks upon private character are within the limits of the law) now makes the publication his own. It is not only the manifesto of those who are responsible for the proceedings of the Secretary of the parent Society in London, but it goes forth with the local influence and authority of the Bath Auxiliary. You were addressing a clergyman, sir; you were not addressing a military officer, or other secular gentleman, who had complained that a pamphlet was issued under your name and sanction, in which he was accused of "misrepresentations," "slanders," making "assertions false and groundless," "calumny," "rancour," "acting perseveringly the part of an enemy, persecutor, and slanderer," not fit to be replied to, as not being a "respectable" person, "supporting a cause which he is conscious can only be maintained by downright falsehoods," "a tissue of ignorance, misrepresentation, and falsehood," "disgracing himself and the cause of the Gospel," and "uttering more falsehoods in six lines" than your friend "can refute in so many pages." No, sir, you were addressing only a clergyman, not a military officer or a secular gentleman, when you expressed your warm approbation of a pamphlet in which he is thus spoken of; adding your own opinion, that it was called for by his "personal attacks" and unfounded statements—that is, that he was justly spoken of as a slanderer, a man not of respectability, and an aggravated falsifier; and without the slightest apology for the use of such expressions, though you are pleased to add that you did not wish that his feelings should be wounded by them. Being President of a "Trinitarian Bible Society," and addressing a clergyman, you are excused from being asked whether you retract the words "personal attacks" and "unfounded statements;"—meaning "slanders" and "falsehoods;"—and whether, having made yourself generally responsible for the pamphlet, you revoke every syllable in it which imputes wrong motive, intentional mistatement, or is in any way personally offensive. You are also excused from being asked whether it is usual to apply so quiet a phrase as "wounding your feelings" when a gentleman is called a "slanderer," and an affirmer of more falsehoods in six lines than your friend can refute in six pages. As to what you say about my feelings being wounded, I beg to reply, that no person who could write such words as I have copied, could wound my feelings. I might be very sorry that he made himself so uncomfortable in writing; but he could as little wound my feelings, as injure my character with any person who knew me.

But these things in passing. The only matter of business which arises out of your letter is this: You affirm that I have made "personal attacks," which your friend calls "slanders," and "unfounded statements," which he calls "falsehoods." Now I ask you to prove these averments. Name the individual whom I have personally attacked; and name the statement which is unfounded. I am not aware that in any statement which I have made is there even a misapprehension, nor has your friend proved one: but as to *wiffully* unfounded statements or slanderous personal attacks, I should not condescend to say that I did not make them. I could not make them; it is not in my education, my feelings, my religion, my habits, or my associations, to have done so. I cannot say, in such a matter, that "my heart sheweth me the wickedness of the wicked." I must presume that even your friend supposed what he wrote was true, though he was labouring under some extraordinary hallucination of mind.

As to the "anonymous author," T. H., I know not who he is; he did not write in the Christian Observer, nor am I answerable for his pamphlet: and I do not see how your invitation to Mr. Thelwall to reply to him should have led to calling me by such sonorous vocables as your friend has thought becoming the Trinitarian Bible Society to use, and which you, as one of its Presidents, do not disclaim or apologize for.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

S. C. WILKS.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

9 Great Bedford Street, Bath, January the 6th, 1840.

Rev. Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 2d instant: and in so doing beg to say that I am perfectly satisfied with your assurance that no discourtesy was intended by the passage in particular, and the style in general of your letter, which I confess did not appear to me as remarkable for its cour-

tesy. I take occasion to express my regret that you should have considered the omission of the term *Rev.*, at the commencement and close of my letter, as a token of *disrespect*. The fact is, that I have hitherto been, and still am, under the impression, that the use of the words *Rev. Sir* and *Rev. Mr.*, though no doubt you may vindicate their employment by what you may deem sufficiently high sanction, are nevertheless accounted by many gentlemen as mere vulgarisms. Inclining therefore, as I do, to this latter view of the subject, I must needs regard your reproach as being ill-founded and undeserved.

Besides, as you thus exact upon me in affairs of etiquette and form, I may be permitted to draw your attention to the character and style of your own letters, which of course I am to regard, on such points, as examples for imitation. In the first, I would deprecate the introduction of the word *Sir*, which twice occurs in the *body* of your last letter, and which is calculated to give a harsh and even insulting tone to your remonstrance. Secondly, I must beg to take exception to the subscription in your first letter of *Obedt. Servt.*, and of *Obed. Servant* in your last; abbreviations which, especially to a *stranger*, and he a gentleman, good breeding unequivocally condemns. Lastly, I have to express my surprise and regret that you should remind me that I am "addressing a clergyman, not a military officer," &c. Again: "Being President of a Trinitarian Bible Society, you are excused being asked whether you retract," &c.; which phrases signify that if I had not known you to be a "clergyman," I should, from the apprehension of personal consequences, have avoided sending you the reply which you received!! I cannot forbear, as my sole commentary on such intimations, observing that if this had been addressed to Mr. Thelwall instead of to me, that respected clergyman would have had some plea to retort upon you the charge which you bring against him of "hallucination." But to leave this subject for the business of your letter, I have to deny the assumptions and inferences which you deem yourself at liberty to fasten on my reply. In answer to your question, I plainly declared that the Reply to the Editor of the Christian Observer, written by my friend, was altogether his own production. In regard, therefore, to its style or language, I do not feel bound to claim or disclaim, to maintain or "retract," any thing. But as concerns the defence of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and the hollow and dishonest attempts of some of that Society's opponents, I assert that I deem the Rev. A. S. Thelwall's pamphlet, like the celebrated reply of Mr. Robert Haldane, unanswerable.

The next point which I have to notice, is your demand that I should prove my allegation of "personality" and of "unfounded statement." In reference to both these questions I have only to observe, that, especially as a threat of prosecution is pending against my friend, I must take leave to decline giving you a specific answer: I deem it best to refer you to what the Rev. A. S. Thelwall has already written, and to what he may further have to adduce, on this subject. But in thus declining to comply with your demand, I beg to be held free from intentional disrespect. Finally, in reference to the alleged coldness of the expression of "my regret at your feelings being wounded," I can only say, in extenuation, that my attention has been mainly attracted to the *principles* involved, rather than to the *persons*, and to controversy itself rather than to the parties engaged in it; and as I know the Editor of the Christian Observer merely in the character of an antagonist to a cause which I regard as the sacred cause of God, my sympathies are altogether engaged on the other side. Still, however, I assert that in waging war against what I believe to be false and highly injurious principles, I must lament that the personal feelings, even of the *opponent* of what I deem the truth, should be wounded, and more especially when such opponent appears in the office and profession of a clergyman and a Christian.

I subscribe myself, Rev. Sir, your obedient Servant,

ARTHUR STANLEY.

P.S. I beg to add, that this letter, though dated the 6th, was written on the 4th; but an accident having occurred to the paper, I was obliged to delay the transcription to this day.

Mr. Wilks wrote a reply to the above; but his friends urged him not to trouble himself farther, as Mr. Stanley had neither apologised for the attack; nor, though he made himself a party in it, was able, when requested, to bring proof of what he affirmed; but added insult to injustice by referring him to Mr. Thelwall's pamphlet, which Mr. Wilks had complained of as being unjust and unjustifiable. Mr. Thelwall himself, when requested by Messrs. Hatchards, had

not been able to quote a single passage to justify what he had asserted. If Mr. Stanley could have laid his finger upon the "unfounded statements" and "personal attacks" which he was pleased to impute as "imperatively challenging" Mr. Thelwall's epithets, he would have been glad to do so.

There is a heartlessness in Mr. Stanley's letters; and a manner altogether which indicates not only cool contempt for his correspondent, but that the writer is so much of a partizan, so fully assured he is doing God service, that he does not allow himself to look at the matter as he would if two other gentlemen were concerned, and the question were of a different character. He began with etiquette. Mr. Wilks had asked merely for a disclaimer or otherwise: which was delicate; for he was not to assume that Mr. Stanley had knowingly lent his name to insult and injure an unoffending stranger. He also studied the greatest delicacy in the manner in which he put the question. He did not call the pamphlet false, or defamatory, or libellous, or ungentlemanly, and then ask if Mr. Stanley made himself responsible for it; he merely said a pamphlet in which he "was much spoken of;" thus respectfully leaving to his correspondent's better feelings the unprompted duty of detaching himself from it. But even had he used some sharpness under the provocation of Mr. Stanley's lending his name, and circulating a pamphlet, to prove him a liar, calumniator, and slanderer, it might have been not quite out of etiquette. An unoffending clergyman, exposed to the painful necessity of complaining of charges, even to allude to which was revolting to him, might have been excused if he did not rectify his words to the courtly meridian of Bath.

Again; Mr. Stanley, in his second letter, reverts to points of etiquette. Most men would feel indignation or contempt at the introduction of such frivolous topics, in reply to complaints of a serious attack upon personal character. And what, after all, was the breach of etiquette? The amanuensis—for both were copied letters—had written "Obdt." for "Obedient;" just as Mr. Stanley himself writes "Revd." for "Reverend." And more than this, Mr. Wilks had twice written "Sir" in the body of his letter, which Mr. Stanley considered "insulting," though the writer had clearly no disrespectful intention. Mr. Stanley, however, after holding up Mr. Wilks to the world in the way he had done, through the pamphlet which he had allowed his friend to address to him, had no warrant to expect much reverence from the injured party. Mr. Wilks was thinking of much more serious matters than etiquette. Had Mr. Stanley's friend written "Sir" and "Obt." in every page, but abstained from accusations against personal character, Mr. Wilks would not have troubled himself with the affair. He did not commence the question of etiquette. What he said was, that there was no more cause for Mr. Stanley's thinking that Mr. Wilks meant to be peremptory in asking merely for a negative or affirmative, than for Mr. Wilks to think Mr. Stanley meant anything significant by not using the customary prefix of a stranger in addressing a clergyman. It is quite true that the application is not always used by gentlemen of the most courteous feelings; and Mr. Wilks meant strictly—and not, as Mr. Stanley supposed, ironically—what he said, that he did not believe Mr. Stanley meant any incivility. What was really couched in the remark was this. A lay friend, in reading Mr. Stanley's letter, had remarked, "He does not choose to address Mr. Wilks as *Reverend*, because he has posted him up as everything contrary to such a title;" and a clergyman had remarked to the same effect. After all that had passed, Mr. Wilks could not absolutely *know* that Mr. Stanley did not so mean; but he intimated that he imputed no much meaning.

Mr. Stanley evidently felt, as Mr. Wilks meant he should, the allusion to the

world's barbarous and unchristian "law of honour." He shewed that Mr. Stanley, as "President of the Bath Trinitarian Bible Society," had lent his name to sanction such epithets respecting a clergyman of unimpeached character, as would not be tolerated in worldly society: thus tacitly reminding his correspondent how much more guarded should be the speech of one who professed to be placed under a far holier rule than the world's distorted notions of honour; a disciple of Him who was meek and lowly, and forbade railing words and false accusations.

And what does Mr. Stanley reply? Does he affirm that he would thus have acted in the case of a lay gentleman of worldly honour? No; he says that "his sole commentary shall be," that if such intimations had been addressed to Mr. Thelwall, they might have justified applying to Mr. Wilks the word "hallucination." Undoubtedly they would; they would have been very absurd, and for more reasons than one; but Mr. Wilks *did not so address them*. But as addressed to Mr. Stanley, they were befitting; and he has yet to justify his conduct before the gentlemen—aye and the ladies—of his own station in Bath and elsewhere; who, when they ask whether he did really make himself a party in applying such epithets to a clergyman, will expect either an ingenuous retraction, or a proof that they were merited; neither of which is yet forthcoming.

One word about "hallucination." Mr. Wilks had used it to defend Mr. Thelwall's heart at the expence of his head; the accusations were utterly groundless, but Mr. Wilks would not retort Mr. Thelwall's epithets of "downright conscious falsehoods," and he therefore charitably supposed that he had worked up his mind to believe them. Now it is somewhat curious that this is not the first, nor even the second, time that the word "hallucination" has been applied, in reference to Mr. Thelwall and his Trinitarian Bible Society friends. The late Rev. John Scott of Hull, in his letter on the Trinitarian Bible Society, published in 1832, speaking of some measure which was "felt to be manifestly embarrassing even by Mr. Thelwall," ejaculates, "Alas for the hallucinations of the human mind." The Rev. Washington Philips, the Honorary Clerical Secretary of your Society, used the same word respecting a fellow-member, under circumstances which may justify an episodical reference, as they bear on what will be stated by and bye in answer to Mr. Thelwall's charge of downright falsehood in what Mr. Wilks said about Irvingian addictions. The affair was this. A member of the Trinitarian Society published a letter in 1832, in which he says:

"Allow me, as a member of the Trinitarian Society, to ask the Rev. G. W. Philips, the secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, in what manner he can more effectually abet the errors of Mr. Irving than by seconding him on a public platform (at the Sailors' Home meeting). Had the Rev. Mr. Brandram been found to second a resolution proposed by Mr. Aspland or Mr. Fox, what would have been said by Mr. Washington Philips?"

Mr. Philips, in reply, affirmed that it marked "hallucination of mind" that the "member of the Trinitarian Society" did not distinguish between the Sailors' Home and a Bible Society; and that "providing a home for destitute seamen is not one of Mr. Irving's errors;" upon which his fellow-member retorted that he had fallen into the reasoning he condemned in the Bible Society; for that subscribing for orthodox Bibles was not a Socinian or Popish error. Besides "hallucination of mind," Mr. Philips accused his fellow-member of "soul-destroying Jesuitism, groundless aspersion," and much more; which, considering that Mr. Philips is naturally a man of a very lovely spirit, shews

the damage he had received by evil communications which corrupt good manners.

You now, sir, have been made aware of the spirit in which your Society is carrying on its labours, and how zealously it is forcing into circulation your Secretary's pamphlet. It is now on its trial, both as to the truth of the charges contained in that pamphlet, and also as to the truth of its more argumentative statements; nor shall it be deprived of the benefit of a refutation of the latter any more than of the former. Indeed they are inseparably implicated. As to the accusations about falsehood, slander, calumny, and the like, it is clear that if your Secretary could have proved his charges by citations, he would have done so; he has selected from the numbers of the *Christian Observer* for last August and September (which contain every syllable on the subject during more than seven years), all that he could find to suit his purpose; and you, sir, are again respectfully challenged to find any thing defamatory, libellous, or even personally offensive, in those extracts. But even if Mr. Wilks had erred in his allegations, though this would not justify a religious society in converting a public question into a groundless attack upon private character, yet there might be some excuse for the circulation of your Secretary's pamphlet, with all its faults, for lack of a better. But it shall now be shewn, that even as regards argument the friends of your Society are not warranted in adopting Mr. Thelwall's representations; and when this is done, you, sir, will doubtless consider what is your own duty as President, and the duty of your committee, towards repairing the wrongs which you have been the means (yourself inadvertently, and only by the influence of your esteemed name) of committing.

Mr. Thelwall has divided his indictment into two counts; the first alleged "MISREPRESENTATIONS;" the second, "the graver offences" of "CONSCIOUS DOWNRIGHT FALSEHOOD." Under each of these counts he has enumerated five overt acts in proof of his charges. The second count, as it contains "the graver offences," shall be first examined.

1.—ALLEGED CONSCIOUS DOWNRIGHT FALSEHOOD THE FIRST.

The *Christian Observer* had maintained, when the Trinitarian Bible Society was established, that there was no practicable medium between an open society and a church; that if one sect is expelled, another must; and another; and so on, till we each arrive at our own communion; and that the partial compromise of the Trinitarian Bible Society could never work well; for that there are many sects which acknowledge the Holy Trinity, but will not cordially unite in sacred exercises.*

* An illustration of this occurred very early in the history of the Trinitarian Society. It was alluded to as follows, at the time, in Mr. Wilks's *Letters to Bishop Burgess* :—

"The founders of the Trinitarian Society said again and again, in speech and in print, that nothing was wanting but the ejection of Socinians to make them all of one spirit in prayer; yet no sooner were they organized than they turned out their own chairman, Mr. Perceval, because he had been prayed for in a manner they disapproved of. If, instead of asking Mr. Thelwall to open the Trinitarian meeting with prayer, the chairman had happened to ask the reverend friend whom some of the committee so much objected to, or many other reverend friends, there would have been instantly a clashing; and as neither party would give way, there must have been issued just such an advertisement as has since appeared; the stronger party denouncing the heretical prayers of the weaker. The friends of the so-called Trinitarian Society have never, I am informed, suffered any person who is not known to be a Calvinist of a somewhat high class to express their wants before God; but are there no pious Arminians? and, to say nothing of members of our own church, is it right that the whole

These anticipations, it was stated, had been fulfilled in the history of the Trinitarian Bible Society. The following is the passage in the Christian Observer, upon a garbled extract from which Mr. Thelwall comments. The words printed in *Italics* are those quoted by Mr. Thelwall; but some of the intervening and following words are essential to the full meaning. The Christian Observer said:—

“ We do not concede to Mr. Thelwall's Society the name of ‘ Trinitarian,’ any more than to Papists the title of ‘ Catholici,’ or to Socinians that of ‘ Unitarians;’ because the assumption is a slur upon other Bible societies, all of which are as really Trinitarian, as the ‘ No. 11 Exeter Hall’ institution. The Naval and Military Bible Society is actually constructed upon their own model; the Christian Knowledge Society, which is a Bible Society upon a scale of magnitude to which it would be romantic to suppose the Exeter Hall institution will ever attain, is guaranteed by the Trinitarianism of the Anglican Church; and the British and Foreign Bible Society, (*though it has not, like the No. 11 Exeter Hall vacillating Society, adopted first one test and then another, but stopped short in its career as soon as a test was proposed to expel the Irving heresies which so deeply infected it*; thus virtually guaranteeing as scriptural and orthodox all that it does not specifically exclude) is in reality, though without the idle parade of an uninforced and utterly useless test, as really Trinitarian as the No. 11 Exeter Hall Society. Its sole object is to circulate a book, Trinitarian in itself, and in every version which the Society has made or uses; the copies in the English being exclusively those of the authorised version, which is Trinitarian in its headings and summaries as well as in the text, so that no Socinian can honestly aid in its circulation; and it is as Trinitarian in its management as in its object, for no Socinian or Arian has ever been on its committee; and the Society would repel with horror the idea of circulating an anti-Trinitarian version—or rather perversion—of the sacred oracles. The No. 11 Exeter Hall Society is not better fortified than the Bible Society; for though it calls itself ‘ Trinitarian,’ it makes no objection to receiving Socinian guineas; and if a Socinian chose to be a member, there is nothing to prevent his becoming so; as the Society does not, like the Christian Knowledge Society, and every other Society which honestly enforces a test, require a testimonial, or a pledge, or a ballot; it prudently asks no questions, but pockets its guineas (when it can get any), and allows any person who chooses, to join it and be a member, upon his personal unchallenged honour that he is what he ought to be. It were absurd to call a Society thus conducted, orthodox, even if there were no other form of heterodoxy but Arianism or Socinianism; but many of the sects one reads of—whether those in the ancient church; or the obsolete Dunkers, Muggletonians, and so forth; or Shakers, Southcottians, Swedenborgians and Irvingites—are heterodox also; yet these the Society does not pretend to exclude; it freely and cheerfully admits them to membership: *Irvingites in particular are its cherished friends*; for when it was proposed to make a regulation which would have excluded those who malign our Divine Redeemer's spotless nature, the majority of the members refused to do so; whereupon the anti-Irvingite portion of its founders quitted it; and strongly as the Christian Observer spoke of the exceptional proceedings of the Institution, our statements fell far short of those of its seceding friends in the Record newspaper and elsewhere; and for this good reason, that they knew better than we did the secrets of its proceedings.”

body of Wesleyan Methodists should be tacitly shut out, as in effect they are? These evils must in time necessarily arise, if a chairman, or a few leading committee-men, are to select one individual among many sects to speak the feelings of all. In choosing speakers for a Society, there is no such difficulty: the individual delivers but his own sentiments; and if he outrage the feelings of others, he can be cut short, or called to order, or refuted: but not so in prayer: there all are supposed to be of one mind, and to agree together touching the things they ask for: if they are not, there is no true prayer: besides which the individual who officiates cannot be stopped or contradicted, and the impression goes forth that his prayer was the general sentiment, though many might have wholly disapproved of the sentiments he uttered. The only remedy for this is, that the persons who unite in prayer should agree in the main in doctrine also; but this in a Bible Society is impossible, unless we at once convert it into a church.”

Mr. Thelwall having cited the words above marked in *Italics*, adds the following comment: "*There is as much falsehood in these assertions as well can be comprised in the same number of words;*" and he had a few lines before intimated that this and the rest of the falsehoods are "*conscious.*" He defies the Christian Observer to prove that there has been any "*vacillation,*" or change of test. Moreover the Christian Observer having quoted the following passage from the Record newspaper, Mr. Thelwall argues that it was written "*in the heat of contention, under an entire misapprehension of the facts of the case;*" adding emphatically: "*Can any thing be more unworthy of the Editor of a religious periodical than thus to rake up the abandoned statements of another in order to propagate what he knows to be false?*" Most surely nothing can be more profligate than to propagate what a man *knows* to be false; or more base than to "*rake up the abandoned statements of another,*" in order to do so. But has Mr. Wilks done so? The following is the passage which he quoted from the Record:—

"It cannot be concealed, and surely we have no wish to conceal, that the first attempt which has been made, by using separation as an instrument to induce the British and Foreign Bible Society to yield the points at present in dispute, has signally failed.

"By an advertisement in another column, our readers will perceive what passed at the special meeting of the Trinitarian Bible Society, which was convened for Thursday last. Those proceedings have, in our judgment, sealed the doom of that institution.

"How completely public confidence was shaken in the Society, by the well-grounded reports that the Committee had not had the wisdom, judgment, or ability to keep themselves free from the pestilent heresy of Mr. Irving, was clearly manifested by the insignificant number which appeared to take part in the business of the day. It appears from the advertisement in another column, that the greatest number present at any part of the day, gentlemen and ladies together, was 105; of these, fifteen were supposed to have retired without voting, three declined to vote, the minority consisted of thirty-nine, and the majority, a very large proportion of which may be presumed to have been Irvingites, was forty-eight!

"So that, even as it regards numbers, to what has the magnificent meeting dwindled which assembled for the formation of this Society! It is not the paucity of its numbers, however, of which we complain. We grieve that it has now identified itself with fundamental error, so that it is impossible for any sound-hearted Christian to have further connection with an institution which has unhappily placed itself in an incomparably worse situation than that of the body from which, on account of its alleged impurity, it separated.

"Should the friends of the British and Foreign Bible Society think it worth while to waste a single word further on the subject, (which we hardly think it is, so complete is the overthrow) they may say—'We told you this from the first—that, according to the principle upon which you sought to build, no edifice could be erected, or if erected hold together. We have however already shown the inaccuracy of this view of the subject.' All that was wanting was a small measure of that common sense in the committee of the new Society, which is to be found in that of the old. Is there any Irvingite—has there been any Socinian—on the committee in Earl-street? No. Are they excluded by law? No; simply by common sense and common wisdom. Is there any openly immoral person in either committee? No. How is he excluded? Simply by a common feeling of propriety. And had there been upon the minds of the committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society any thing approaching to a just sense of the infinite evil bound up in this new heresy which has appeared in the church, any individual even supposed to be infected with it would have been excluded without an approach to a difference of opinion, with exactly the same readiness, and exactly by the same power, as an openly immoral person would have been excluded, had such a one been proposed. That the reverse of all this has been the case, coupled with the resolution which we have just quoted, proves incontestibly that in the minds of that committee there exists a leaning to, or tolerance of, the evil in question, which is in no small degree dangerous to themselves individually, and which must of necessity deprive them of the confidence and support of the sound part of the church of Christ, which otherwise might be disposed to give them its support.

"We accordingly humbly but earnestly exhort all Auxiliary Societies and As-

sociations of the Trinitarian Bible Society, to dissolve their connection with it at once. This Society separated from the British and Foreign Bible Society, because of its admitting Socinians as members, though not one of that body had ever been admitted on the Committee, or assumed any prominence in the proceedings of the parent Society. But here is the Trinitarian Society deliberately approving of those who hold doctrine worse than those of Socinians, becoming not members only, but managers of the Society. They are in truth preparing a cradle for this most malignant heresy, in which it may be rocked and cherished into size and strength—into vigour and maturity. They are fitting up a market-place in which it may meet with many unsuspecting souls, whom it would not otherwise reach, and inoculate them with their deadly virus.

“At the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, though one and another were only gradually admitted into the councils of the originators of the Society, being carefully selected on account of their Christian character, and superior wisdom and sagacity, considerable risk of discomfiture was experienced in the arrangement of the Committee. This danger, however, was happily overcome. The Provisional Committee, from which the Trinitarian Society derived its existence, was a body of men held together by no other tie than their disapprobation of certain practices current in the British and Foreign Bible Society. They were not a body formed of materials, chosen as peculiarly suitable to work harmoniously together,—not of men who were selected for their established Christian character, and sound spiritual judgment, as fitted to command the confidence of the Christian community,—but they were rather brought together by a mere fortuity.”

These, Mr. Thelwall says, are “abandoned statements;” written “in the heat of contention,” and “raked up in order to propagate what he (Mr. Wilks) knows to be false.” It is not just to the conductors of the Record, to assert that they would have written thus if the ground had not been firm under them; but as your Secretary has made a charge of raking up “abandoned statements,” a series of passages shall be quoted which will shew that there was no momentary heat, but conviction built upon the most solid and painful evidence.

The threefold topic of *vacillation*, *tests*, and *the averments in the Record newspaper*, may be conveniently classed together; the first alleged “downright falsehood” having respect to all three. The brief but eventful history of this Society has left to future ages a monitory illustration of the evils which cannot but arise in the catholic Church of Christ, when a few unauthorised individuals—naval and military officers in the foremost rank—set themselves up as test-makers for their brethren.

It may be right to premise, lest Mr. Thelwall should attempt by dates to insinuate a charge of falsehood, that both the friends and the opponents of the Trinitarian Society, in referring to its principles and history, have always justly spoken of it in its connexion with the “Provisional Committee.” Thus the Record, in the passage above quoted, mentions it as “having separated from the British and Foreign Bible Society; because of its admitting Socinians as members;” and again, “The Provisional Committee, from which the Trinitarian Society derived its existence.” The Society was instituted Dec. 7, 1831; but in its first annual Report in Dec. 1832, it very properly blended the proceedings of the Provisional Committee with its own. Thus at page 12, it mentions: “The expenses incurred by the Provisional Committee, amounting to £118. 1s. 1d., together with the printing and circulating nearly 30,000 (of its own) Reports, and other incidental charges connected with this work, have unavoidably swelled this portion of the expenditure,” namely, the expenditure of “the (Trinitarian) Institution.” And at page 45, there is an audit of “the expenses of the Provisional Committee from May 25, to Dec. 7, 1831,” which would not have been fitting matter to be inserted in the Society’s Report, if a very rigid line was to be drawn between Dec. 7, and all previous proceedings. In shewing the “vacillations” to which the attempt

to introduce a partial test gave rise, the whole history of the question, from May to Dec. 1831, must justly and necessarily be included; for the chain was never broken; but lest even the shadow of a shade of pretext should be afforded to justify the imputation of falsehood," it shall be demonstrated that even if oblivion had passed over everything prior to Dec. 7 of that year, enough has since occurred to prove, over and over again, all, and more than all, that the Christian Observer asserted.

In Mr. Wilks's letters to Bishop Burgess, in March and April 1832, appeared the following statements, written at the time of the occurrences, and never comfuted. They may therefore so far be cited as genuine documents; but they shall be abundantly corroborated from authentic sources, especially the Society's own papers. Mr. Wilks wrote at page 29:

"Our friends say at present, that they are content with excluding Papists and Socinians: but how long will they be so? A few months ago they were content with excluding Socinians only, and Papists were an after-thought; and since the formation of the new Bible Society, a third secret test appears to have been agreed upon, by virtue of which Mr. Perceval was banished from his office, in the very institution (the Trinitarian) that had just been formed under his own presidency. Now, however, at length they say, the expurgatorial process is complete: at least some of them say so; for others refuse to hold out any such expectation. The gentlemen, for instance, who are endeavouring to subvert the Hibernian Bible Society, when asked this very question, reply, that they can only say that 'they have gone as far as the Lord has hitherto enlightened them;' and that if he shall enlighten them further, it will then be their duty to act up to their clearer knowledge, and to propose new tests. And thus the whole will be afloat and in confusion, as often as some weak, conscientious, but self-opinionated and headstrong individual shall fancy that God has enlightened him beyond his brethren, to disturb the peace of all our religious institutions. One of our good friends, writing on the matter in the Christian Guardian last October, in reply to the argument, that if we began with one test, we must go on to another, and so on to infinity, was much displeased at such a surmise, and said, 'Is not the line proposed (namely, the exclusion of Socinians) sufficiently clear? Has any one proposed, or even hinted at, any future drawing closer of the boundary; or can any such consequence, inference, or corollary be pointed out as likely to flow from the adoption of the single rule now proposed?' Yet, at the very moment when this good man was thus confidently writing, this infallible never-to-be-altered 'single rule' was being split into two by the addition of Roman Catholics to the proscribed list. Aye, it is rejoined, but we did not think of the Papists at first; it was a serious omission; but now that they are excluded, and we have formed a Society wholly Trinitarian and Protestant, all is right, and no further exclusion will be necessary. But scarcely is the ink dry upon the new constitution, before new exclusions, not recollected before, come into play; and Mr. Perceval is among the first victims."

Again, at page 43, Mr. Wilks added:

"While I am writing, an advertisement is put into my hands, in which the Sackville-street committee (the Trinitarian Society's office was then in Sackville street) apprise their subscribers that they have proceeded in their work of expurgation, by excluding from their body two more of the very classes of persons whom the Christian Observer recommended to their attention as soon as they should have done with the Roman Catholics; namely, 'those who ascribe sin, or a tendency to sin, to our Lord's humanity,' and those who believe 'in alleged miracles and the gift of unknown tongues.'"

A few pages further on (p. 82,) Mr. Wilks had painful occasion to remark to his Right Reverend Friend:

"This ill-starred institution is again afloat in a stormy sea, without rudder, compass, or pilot. It was only a few days since that, in one of my former letters, I traced its progress up to that period, but pleaded exemption from attempting to catch the next Cynthia of the moment. I mentioned how obediently it had followed all the exhortations of the Christian Observer. The Naval-and-Military Bible Society last May adopted an anti-Socinian test, and to this moment has no other; and the Trinitarian Society at first intended to have no other; but on being

told that this was inconsistent, and that they ought, if they once began, to go on and exclude Roman Catholics, they very reverently obeyed. Well, then, it was added, you ought next to go on to the Irvingites, and exclude them from your committee: straightway they obeyed again. And here many persons thought the whole was to stop; but the unlucky Christian Observer having last month suggested to them to call a public meeting and re-arrange the whole, a public meeting is obediently summoned for the 4th of April, and the litigant members of this 'Society conducted upon scriptural principles,' are to have such another 'bear-garden' (this harsh word was that venerable man's, not Mr. Wilks's) as Mr. Rowland Hill said they had made of the Bible Society meeting last May."

The next class of proofs shall be from the Record newspaper; but it would occupy a pamphlet to extract all that might be cited. The following fragments are but a sample; and your Secretary has caused them to be "raked up" in self-defence, by charging the Editor of the Christian Observer with downright falsehood, and publishing "abandoned statements in order to propagate what he knows to be false." The Record extracts shall be interspersed with illustrative citations from the Society's own documents.

The Record of Feb. 29, 1832, published the Resolutions of the Society's committee, in which they say: "Without wishing to adopt, or to recommend to their constituency, a new test of membership, the Committee feel themselves called upon to state unequivocally that they will" — do what?—"exclude from the management of the Society's affairs" those whom they had just named, the Irvingites, whose tenets they describe, and among them "a belief in alleged miracles and the gift of unknown tongues."* Mr. Thelwall was one of the parties to be specially excluded. Here another potential though unwritten test had been introduced, to get rid of which the Irvingite portion of the Society, with others who disapproved of the above restrictions, convened a meeting for April 12. Mr. Washington Phillips, who adhered closely to the Irvingite section, published an advertisement in which he complained that the committee, instead of administering the existing laws, *had framed a new one*—that is, an anti-Irvingite test.

The Record of April 5, writes:—

"This ever-active sect (the Irvingites), as they have brought the Continental Society to the point of dissolution, and shaken the Reformation Society to its foundations, have contrived to insinuate themselves into the committee of the new (the Trinitarian) Society. To put a stop, if possible, to the working of this pestilential leaven, the resolutions of the 2d of March were adopted by an overwhelming majority of the committee. The Irvingites and their abettors presently got a sufficient number of signatures to call a special meeting."

The Record of April 9, repeats and confirms these statements.

* The word Irvingism has always been of lax application. It is not to be inferred that all who took what was called the Irvingite side followed all Mr. Irving's opinions. Mr. Thelwall himself did not, though with his Trinitarian colleague, Mr. Boys, he was a zealous stickler for modern miracles. When the Secretary of the Edinburgh Bible Society wrote to Mr. Washington Phillips (Feb. 3, 1832) that there was "an obstacle to cordial co-operation with the Trinitarian Bible Society," by reason of information that "leading individuals in the committee favour the sentiments of Mr. Edward Irving;" and that attempts were making to introduce into the management of the Society persons tainted with these sentiments," Mr. Phillips vaguely replied, "I cannot understand what relevancy these sentiments can have to the cordial operation of the (Edinburgh and the Trinitarian) Institutions;" and that the inquiry was too wide to admit of specific reply, "as Mr. Irving's sentiments are *very various*." The secretary of any institution not thus "tainted" could have replied without hesitation, "We know what you allude to, and we have nothing of the kind among us."

At this meeting the pro-Irvingite section of the Society were victorious. An official abstract of what passed upon the occasion was addressed to the "Members and Friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society;" in the Circular prefixed to which Mr. Philips declares "the *new test* unconstitutional and uncalled for;"—so that there had been a new test; as the requisitionists who summoned the Special Meeting declare more than a dozen times in the "Statement" which they issued on that occasion. They affirm that "The first characteristic principle of every religious Society is, that *one and the same religious test* should qualify for membership and management; but that "An additional and separate religious test for management is now introduced;" "the new test not only differs from, but is *opposed to*, the character of the present test imposed by the fourth law;" "the new test gives a most ambiguous definition of a heresy touching the nature of our Lord and Saviour;" "the persons (the Irvingites) whom this interpretation is intended to exclude, as has been proved by the rejection of some to whom this heresy was *imputed*,—*these very persons assisted to frame the laws, laboured assiduously in the formation of the Society, and were foremost in upholding the doctrine of the Trinity: it is obvious they never contemplated their own exclusion.*" Certainly not; and it is very unkind, nine years after, to pretend that Irvingites were never among "the cherished friends" of the Society. The "Statement" goes on for many a page in the same style. For example: "The introduction of a *new test* into the institution so immediately after its formation, gives but too plausible ground for supposing the predictions of its opponents will be verified, and that new tests at every moment will be introduced." But it was not "opponents" only who said so; for the "Statement" had just before recorded that one of its leaders, Capt. J. E. Gordon, had said the same. The passage is worth quoting; and be it remembered that it is an official paper of the Society; the identical "Statement" which led to the Irvingite triumph and the orthodox secession.

"The constituents have no guarantee whatever for the religious principles of the persons whom the Committee may select as members of their own body, except the *discretion* of the Committee, which, to judge from past circumstances, is not over abounding. Viewed, therefore, simply on these grounds, the resolutions are most unconstitutional; but if we advance, it will be found they have taken the Society *wholly out of its course*. The institution was formed for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures on *Scriptural principles*, but now it is converted into a *theological* association. It was founded to uphold the doctrine of the Trinity, but now it is become a tribunal before which heresy is to be arraigned and condemned. Nor is it to be supposed, that its labours in this new department may be few and rare; it has been unequivocally *asserted, that if FIFTY HERESIES ARISE, FIFTY NEW LAWS TO MEET THEM MUST BE FORMED!* The Committee, therefore, to judge by its *past* discussions, will have abundant employment for the future, without attempting the circulation of Bibles. In a day famed for novelties, there is little doubt occasions for new laws, new interpretations, and new definitions, will be continually presented. The discharge, therefore, of its legal functions, the impartial administration of its concerns, or the work of superintending the distribution and translation of the Scriptures, may now be considered as wholly superseded by its ecclesiastical office. But is the Committee really qualified for such a duty? Have such powers really been vested in it? Does it possess the authority of an ecclesiastical tribunal? Have the constituents of this Society any right to confer such an office? These are important inquiries, and not hastily to be solved, unless it be by the prompt and reasonable negation, which common sense puts on an idea so absurd."

Pretty well this for a *no-vacillation* Society! Such were the statements of the Irvingite section; which, upon the secession of their brethren, became the Society. The orthodox members passed a counter resolution, affirming that a public meeting had "practically declared that the Committee was not at liberty

to disclaim a connexion with dangerous error, or to exclude from the joint management of the Society's concerns persons whose principles and practice were found to interfere with the successful discharge of the duties for which they were responsible." They in consequence formed themselves into "a provisional committee to advance the original design of the institution."

The following is the comment of the Record newspaper of April 16, upon these circumstances :

"How completely public confidence was shaken in the Society by the well-grounded reports that the Committee had not had the wisdom, judgment, or ability to keep themselves free from the pestilential heresy of Mr. Irving, &c." "We grieve that it has now identified itself with fundamental error; so that it is impossible for any sound-hearted Christian to have further connexion with an institution which has unhappily placed itself in an incomparably worse situation than that of the body from which, on account of its alleged impurity, it separated."

The Record went on to shew the powerful influence of Irvingism in the committee; and that a strong body of Irvingites, including Mr. Drummond and Mr. Irving himself, had been kept out only by the efforts of the gentlemen who had resigned, so that the Society was now consigned to their hands; whereas there had never been an Irvingite, said the Record, in the British and Foreign Bible Society committee; nor a Socinian either: but, added the Record, "the Trinitarian Society deliberately approves of those who hold doctrines worse than those of Socinians, becoming not members only, but managers of the Society." "They are preparing a cradle for this most malignant heresy, in which it may be rocked and cherished into vigour and maturity." Individual members made similar statements in quitting the Society. Thus Mr. Boswell resigned "because heresy and fanaticism have a share in the management of its affairs." But it were endless to proceed with such testimonies. The Westminster Auxiliary Committee adopted a resolution, that the Society "virtually identifies its management with dangerous and deadly error respecting the Second Person of the Holy Trinity." This "deadly error" has happily died away.

In the Record of April 26, appeared a very long and forcible editorial article, in which it is deeply lamented that men who had left one Society because it had no test, should "receive Irvingites into their bosom."

These passing extracts may serve to shew whether Mr. Wilks is justly accused by your Society of raking up statements written in heat and misinformation, and now abandoned, to propagate what he knew to be false, that the Society had "received Irvingites into its bosom." But to make surety doubly sure, there shall be given another series of passages from the Record, written many months after, when the alleged heat had had ample time to cool, and mistakes, if they existed, to be corrected.

Record, July 26.—"While we deem the above observations seasonable and necessary under existing circumstances, without any reference to the Trinitarian Bible Society, the zealous but feeble efforts which the remaining members of the original committee of that Society are making to regain the confidence of the Christian public, which they had so utterly lost, calls upon us to make a practical application of the principles now laid down to the case of that institution. Our readers will remember under what hopeful and favourable circumstances that Society began its career; so favourable were they, that an active member of the present committee, who has unhappily lapsed into Irvingism, calculated on plausible grounds that the income of the Society, for the year commencing with its first general meeting, would amount to £30,000. What arrested its progress, and caused its prospects to set in gloom and night? Simply the attempt—and as it unhappily proved the successful attempt—to introduce into its Committee the heretical leaven of Irvingism, of which we have been now speaking."

"It was not till matters had come to this crisis, that a majority of the Committee, alive to the awful nature of those heretical delusions, whose professors they had been so long urged to admit among them, and thus give to their errors additional currency and influence in the Church, adopted and published the counter-resolutions, which finally occasioned the Special General Meeting of the Society on the 12th of April last, and which issued, in consequence of the Resolution then adopted, in the resignation or retirement of the majority of the original Committee."

"Many of our readers will remember that the aggregate amount of members who voted on that occasion was only eighty-seven; that the majority which carried the objectionable resolution was forty-eight, and the minority who opposed it was thirty-nine; that one of the most zealous and distinguished supporters of Mr. Irving took a prominent part in the business of the day; and that, by the Resolution adopted at this Meeting, an avowed believer of this awful heresy, then sitting as a director of the affairs of the Society, was confirmed in his place, and the admission of that class in future, without hinderance, or limitation, was indirectly sanctioned. As our readers well know, the passing of this Resolution was immediately followed by the resignation of the majority of the Committee, and the management of the Society remains to this hour in the hands of those members who, however excellent their intentions, resolved, in fact, that while they would not admit Socinians even as members of their Society, to receive Irvingites into their bosom, as the leaders and heads of the Institution."

"This is our deliberate judgment still, and while very strenuous efforts are making by some well-intentioned, but, in our opinion, most mistaken and ill-advised individuals, to advance the interests of a Society which carries this deadly blot on its forehead; we again most affectionately, but most solemnly, warn those who love the Saviour, and wish to maintain and advance his truth, to have no connexion with an Institution which has been led, under a bad influence and in an evil day, to admit into its bosom the promoters of a system of error in the last degree deteriorating to our Divine Lord, and destructive to the principles of the Christian faith."

Record, August 13.—"The fact is admitted, that the majority of the original Committee retired, in consequence, as they alleged, of a blind toleration of, or leaning to, Irvingism, by the rest of the Committee; and it is to be remembered that among the men who deliberately adopted this conclusion, and act upon it to the present hour, are the Rev. Mr. Howels, the Rev. Dr. Holloway, and the Rev. Mr. Reece—men whose judgment on the subject, from their age and experience, their sound talent and deep theological knowledge, is entitled to very high consideration. Now, the question we put to our readers is this—Do not the Resolutions of the Committee, now given to the world, fully confirm and establish the integrity of the judgment of the Rev. Gentlemen whom we have named, and of those who acted with them? For is it possible that reasonable men, distinctly accused of this particular toleration of heresy, and most exceedingly anxious to clear themselves in the eyes of the Christian world from the imputation, should publish such a set of Resolutions as the above, were not the charge well founded? We say it is impossible. The Committee acknowledge it to be a solemn duty, and that it shall be, with God's blessing, their earnest endeavour to select the soundest and steadiest Christians as members of Committee; and accordingly being directly accused of tolerating, or leaning to, the awful heresy and lamentable fanaticism of Irvingism, do they now, when apparently it is impossible to avoid it, declare that they will utterly repudiate it, in the selection of the soundest and steadiest Christians? Not at all. They are as far from such a declaration as possible. They say, 'With respect to particular doctrines, held by different parties in the Church of Christ, who acknowledge and maintain that grand fundamental doctrine, this Committee are determined, by God's grace, not to be made the organ of any party, nor to be entangled in further disputes.' By the publication of these Resolutions, they, in fact, decide the question at issue between themselves and the retired members—between themselves and the Christian Church—as distinctly as if they had publicly proclaimed it with the sound of a trumpet."

Record, August 27.—"The majority of the Committee who executed the trust they had undertaken, were of opinion that the *minority* tolerated Irvingism to such an extent, that they could not proceed consistently with their duty to God or man, unless the workings of the heresy in the Committee were put down."

"We warn Mr. Harcourt* that he has himself no due sense of the evils bound up in Irvingism. *We do not believe that one member of the Trinitarian Bible Committee has a due sense of them, and hence the spectacle which we see.* How does our correspondent (Mr. Vernon Harcourt) speak again of the subject in the closing paragraph of his letter? In the following terms:— 'I am myself a decided opposer of Mr. Irving's views of the humanity of Christ, considering them to be directly opposed to the plainest declarations of Scripture, and as every error is more or less injurious to the soul, I would gladly do what I could to check their dissemination.' How very calm! If our Correspondent were writing of the most insignificant mistake in Christian doctrine he could not more coolly express himself. Does he talk of Mr. Irving's heresy? No, of Mr. Irving's 'views.' It is an 'error,' and like every other error, it is more or less 'injurious,' and of course he would check it if he could. But is this the tone for a man of God to adopt with regard to a most pestilential and destructive heresy, if he were aware of its true nature? Of a heresy which asserts that the Divine and Immaculate Saviour had a devil-possessed nature—a nature in which sin bristled thick like quills on the back of the porcupine? Of a heresy which propounds as a 'Great Truth' that the baptism of the Holy Ghost doth bring to every believer the presence of the Father and the power of the Holy Ghost, according to that measure, at the least, in which Christ, during the days of his flesh, possessed the same! which, in consequence, asserts that polluted man may be as holy as Christ (some of the disciples holding that they are so)! Of a heresy which shifts the ground of the justification of a sinner from the rock to the sand, asserting that he must appear before God in judgment in his own holiness, and not invested in the righteousness of his Lord! These are some of the things which Mr. Vernon Harcourt calmly and nakedly calls 'Mr. Irving's views.' Things which go to shake the Christian faith to its very foundations, which, though it may not be generally seen, have Socinianism embodied in them, and tend in different directions to the overthrow of the entire truth of the Gospel!"

"What, we ask in conclusion, is the simple history of the case? It is as follows:—That the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed. That the majority of the Committee found the workings of this destructive heresy so strong in the body, that they deemed it indispensable to adopt a strong resolution, with the view of effectually putting it down. That the minority called the special meeting of the members to get quit of the resolution. That through the active assistance of Irvingites in the room and on the platform on that day, they carried a Resolution, 'That the fourth law is sufficiently restrictive to render no further tests of faith necessary as a qualification to claim and exercise all the rights of membership and management.' That the meeting thus sanctioned the sitting at that time of a professed Irvingite at the Board, and the nomination of all other Irvingites whom the Committee might choose thereafter to appoint. That in consequence of the introduction of this heresy into the Society, its prospects, which were previously full and bright, have well nigh gone out in darkness; and that recently, when the present Committee thought it right to publish Resolutions in consequence of their being charged with a leaning to Irvingism, instead of denying the charge, they published a train of Resolutions, tending exactly to the same point as those which, with the assistance of Mr. Henry Drummond, and other Irvingites, they passed at the general meeting, viz. that they would be perfectly neutral with regard to the heresy—an 'organ neither for nor against it.'

"Of the propriety of this course of proceedings our readers can judge as well as we, and we rejoice in the conviction that they, in common with the Christian Church at large, have arrived at a correct decision."

Record, September 3.—"Thus the Committee resolve, in the face of day, that if a man, whether an Orthodox man or an Irvingite, profess a belief in the Holy Trinity, that is a sufficient qualification for him to claim and exercise all the rights of membership and management"—'that with respect to particular doctrines held by different parties in the church of Christ, who acknowledge and maintain that grand fundamental doctrine, this Committee are resolved not to be made the organ of any party, nor to be entangled in any further disputes;' or as Captain Harcourt expresses it in his letter in to-day's paper, to act 'upon a principle of neutrality with respect to all who profess a belief in the Trinity.' This is what the Committee say to the church and to the world, is to be

* What Mr. Harcourt is this? Is it Capt. Vernon Harcourt who occupied the Chair at the Society's annual meeting in 1839?

their principle of action. And what do these things mean, but that in considering whom they shall select for managing the affairs of the Society, they shall act upon a principle of 'neutrality' with regard to Irvingism, not considering whether a man is an Irvingite or not, in estimating his qualifications as office-bearer?"

"The retired members not only believed that the Irvingites were 'promulgators of decided error,' but they resolved collectively, as well as individually, to act upon their knowledge. They successfully laboured for months to prevent men tainted with this heresy, who were pressed upon them, from being made office-bearers of the Society. At last, seeing no apparent end to the working of the leaven among them, they passed, in Committee the strong resolution on the subject, which gave occasion to the general meeting of the Society. This meeting resolved that the Irvingites were suitable office-bearers. The retired members went out, and the Society instantly hastened to its ruin."

"With regard to the retired members, Captain Harcourt may rest assured that nothing beside the working of Irvingism induced them to retire; and as to the present Committee, we had not expected to have been obliged to repeat our previous assurance, that, individually, we have no feelings but those of kindness to them. We desire their good in every way. We would do them good in any way, had we opportunity. And assuredly in now 'withstanding them to the face,' we exhibit no want of love to them."

"To the 'call' of Captain Harcourt we reply, that as 'lovers of truth and justice,' we are bound to hold fast the views of this subject which we have hitherto promulgated. Insinuations that we make our columns the 'vehicle of unjust reproaches and unfounded accusations,' move us not. Never in any thing had we a clearer conscience. Our cause is now before our readers and the church, and we are willing to leave it to their decision. But no decision, though it were against us, could deprive us of the consolation of knowing that, throughout, we have acted with integrity, and in the way which we thought necessary for the sacred interests of Divine truth."

To say that such statements were written in haste, and are *revoked*,—for that is the colour which the word "abandoned" is made to assume, in order to prove Mr. Wilks a liar,—is at least a very energetic affirmation;—Mr. Thelwall could find in his vocabulary some stronger epithet for it. How could recorded *facts* be abandoned? And when or where did the Record eat these its own words? *Positively no where.*

But all the burden shall not be thrown upon the Christian Observer or the Record. Your own documents, sir, shall furnish a few facts and statements (plenty more are in readiness if required) in addition to those already presented. You have had some specimens of "vacillation;" first an anti-Socinian test; then an added anti-Popish test; then an anti-Irvingite test; then its rejection; and then the splitting to pieces of the Society. Still the machine would not work; and accordingly the Report of Dec. 6, 1832, recommended a new test; and which was adopted by the Society;—a test more stringent than any of the former; namely, the actual addition of five "Articles of Religion to be appended to the laws of the Institution." These Articles were the first, fourth, fifth, and fifteenth, of the Articles of the Church of England; with one from the confession of faith of the Church of Scotland. The Committee tried to conceal the blazoned truth that there was a new test (for many persons might choose to call themselves Trinitarians who would not sign these five Articles) by the adroit phrase, a "declaration of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in its practical points." They said that inconveniences had arisen from "defective definition;" so that the institution "was left unguarded and even defenceless in some important parts of Divine truth," as if defining what before was undefined were not a new test; and as if five Articles could supply all that was wanting, if once a code of doctrine and "practical points not deficient in any important points" of divine truth was to be the Society's test. The Society thus to this very hour repudiates, "as not an important part of divine truth," whatever is not contained in those five Articles! The object of this new test was to gain back

the anti-Irvingite seceders. In truth, throughout, never did a Society conduct its affairs upon a more temporising system of "vacillating" expediency. But, sir, you have not yet come to the end of "vacillation" and "new tests." Though test upon test had been tried, and fifty were threatened if necessary, and articles of faith had been added; yet hitherto no wedge was allowed to be admitted which might split the Church of England from the Church of Scotland; or either of these from the Evangelical Dissenters. But at length some of the Church of England Members of the Society began to object to union with Dissenters of every class. What was now to be done? The Society had ejected Papists and Socinians; but there was still a fly in the pot of ointment. The Evangelical Dissenters are Trinitarians; they have no objection to your five selected Articles; and your Reports, preachers, and speakers, have from the very first made union with them an indispensable rule of your Institution in all its Auxiliaries and Associations. Detailed proof were superfluous; for the eye glances over such passages as the following in all your publications:—

("Laws and Regulations for Auxiliary Societies.—Members :) The Members of this Auxiliary Society shall consist of *Protestants who acknowledge their belief in the Holy Trinity.*"

(*Report for 1834.*) "It has respected the scruples and feelings of the pious Dissenter, while it has met the wishes and views of the conscientious Churchman."

(*The Rev. J. Cumming's Speech, 1834.*) "We avoid the Scylla of Sectarianism, of which they are guilty who form a Church of Scotland, or Church of England, or Dissenting, Bible Society."

(*Report, 1835.*) "The duty of maintaining and promoting the Catholic faith, which vitally affects the interests of the Catholic Church, is paramount to every other; nor can the claims of Church communion or membership, however desirable, supersede or take precedence of it."

(*Quarterly Extracts, Jan. 1836.*) "To base the Society on the broad ground of a profession of faith on the Holy Spirit is to open a door wide enough to admit all that God recognizes as members of the Church of Christ, &c."

On this point then there was to be no "vacillation," much less surrender. But trace Mr. Thelwall's steps, where, by reason of ecclesiastical differences of opinion, the assertion of this principle would subtract guineas from the Trinitarian Bible Society, and send them to its illustrious rival the Christian Knowledge Bible Society. Now, sir, a recent fact shall be stated, which you may not be aware of; but which shews that your Society is willing to relax or tighten its tests, as it finds convenient; and to throw overboard its best friends and its most sacred pledges, should it suit its interest to do so.

These are serious words: now to the proof. The leading members of the "Liverpool Auxiliary Trinitarian Bible Society," having withdrawn from it "on the ground of its not possessing a more decidedly Church of England character," Mr. Thelwall was deputed to make overtures to them on behalf of the London committee. And what was the first concession? To eject Trinitarian Dissenters! to commit that very act which Mr. Thelwall and his colleagues had so often described, not merely as a breach of the fundamental rules of the Society, but most culpably schismatical. The plan proposed was to unite the Churches of England and Scotland in a Trinitarian Bible Committee; and to repudiate all other Trinitarians! And this is consistency! There has been no vacillation!

But the worst is yet untold. You, sir, who know the history of the Society, are aware that it owes almost every thing to Scotsmen and members of the Church of Scotland. The whole sap and storm against the British and Foreign Society, and the building up and continuance to this hour of the Trinitarian Society, were conducted under strong Caledonian influence. Those members

of the Church of England who did not approve of a Society without a test mostly carried out their principle to its legitimate extent, and subscribed exclusively for Bibles to the Christian Knowledge Society. Yet Mr. Thelwall actually proposed to the Liverpool Auxiliary Trinitarian Society, if the rejection of Trinitarian Dissenters was not enough, to repudiate also the Church of Scotland! Any thing to keep them from the British and Foreign Bible Society on the one hand, and the Christian Knowledge Society on the other. Does that able and excellent man, Mr. Cumming, know this? This was the unkindest stab of all. Yet there was no vacillation! no relaxing or binding tests to suit convenience!

But there was yet another step. If after rejection upon rejection—Socinians, Papists, Evangelical Dissenters, and lastly the Church of Scotland—the Anglicans of Liverpool could not unite with the Trinitarian Society, what had Mr. Thelwall the modesty to propose? He proposed that they should form an “Independent Society,” which his Society would supply with Bibles “at cost price”—as of course would the Christian Knowledge Society, or the British and Foreign Bible Society, and think it no favour;—and then, if the funds collected were more than were necessary for the local wants, (which without doubt they would be if the “Independent Society” was prosperous), these Churchmen were not to use the overplus for Foreign objects themselves, or to send it to the Bible department of the Christian Knowledge Society, but to remit it to Mr. Thelwall’s Society! The hesitating, imploring manner, in which this cool suggestion is breathed out, almost partakes of the ludicrous. “Perhaps,” says Mr. Thelwall, “such an Independent Society might find hereafter some specific object in the Foreign operations of the Trinitarian Bible Society, to which it might *wish* (Mr. Thelwall’s *Italics*) to devote the surplus; while at the same time this *would be left entirely to its own discretion and Christian feeling.*” The answer of the Liverpool people was to the effect of “Thank you for nothing.” How courteous of Mr. Thelwall to leave an “Independent Society” entirely to its own discretion. He was so kind as to promise not to coerce it.

When all these proposals had been successively, *but not successfully*, made; and when it was found that “vacillation,” and new test after test, though so lavishly proffered, had effected nothing; then, it is added, “the Secretary came away with the full persuasion that the wisdom and duty of the Committee is to keep their present ground, without any alteration of the plan and constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society, either as to principle or details.” This “persuasion” was doubtless very magnanimous; but unhappily it did not come to light till after all the arts of vacillation, new tests, breaking faith, burying old friends,—aye, even Mr. Cumming himself—every thing, in short, but losing sight of subscriptions and donations, had been exhausted. And let it be remembered that there is not one rule for “Auxiliaries” and another for the parent Society, so that what was unlawful in London might be lawful at Liverpool; for the ninth rule of the Society declares that “All Auxiliary, or Branch Societies, or Associations, that unite or co-operate with this Society, shall adopt the principles set forth in its laws, in order to their becoming an integral part thereof.” But all this was to be sacrificed to get the Liverpool guineas.*

* It may seem ungracious to allude to money-matters, but the question of “the Socinian’s guinea” would furnish a curious note upon “vacillation,” or rather inconsistency. How often, in the declarations against the Bible Society, did we hear of the Socinian’s guinea being “Achan’s wedge:” breeding a moral pestilence

In proof that your Secretary has really done all this—and done it officially, in the name and on behalf of your Society—you are referred to your Society's Quarterly Extracts, No. xii. March 1839. The passage, though long, shall be transcribed and annexed; but to shew the inconsistency of the whole proceeding, two other short documents shall be prefixed.

The following was part of the Circular of the provisional committee by which your Society was organized.

“That we learn with unfeigned grief, that an erroneous impression has been extensively made and received, that we contemplate a dissolution of the connexion which has hitherto subsisted, in the Bible Society, between the members of the Established Church, and those of Dissenting denominations of Christians. We, therefore, feel called upon distinctly to deny any such intention, and to declare unequivocally and affectionately, that it is our earnest desire to bind together persons of all denominations, who acknowledge the scriptural doctrine of the Holy Trinity.”

This pledge was adopted by your Society; and we find Mr. Thelwall himself speaking as follows at the Westminster Trinitarian Society in 1832.

“Our desire and endeavour then has been, to form, not an *exclusive* or *sectarian*, but truly *catholic*, Society. (Applause.) We have been accused indeed of contracted and sectarian views; of a desire to form a merely Church Society, from which our Dissenting brethren would have been excluded. Nor have there been wanting some few, here and there, who strongly urged us so to do. In some respects this would have been more easy and convenient than the course we have adopted: and the feelings and predilections of many of our number would

in a Society; and that if it were possible to carry out discrimination so far as to inspect the hearts of men, no contribution ought to be accepted which was not offered in faith and prayer. One of the founders of the Trinitarian Society said that to take a Socinian's money, and not to give him a share in the management, would be unjust; and that as a Bible Society ought not to allow the latter, it ought not to accept the former. Another said that the whole matter was involved in the question whether (to use a common phrase) “a guinea was a guinea,” given either by a believer or unbeliever; and Joseph Wolff talked of “Ephesian-silver-smith-like missionaries.” Another writer said, that “the money offered by a Socinian to the Bible Society, is to all intents and purposes *offered to an idol*.” Such was the doctrine when the old Bible Society was to be opposed. But what was it when guineas were to be collected for the new one? Your Secretary writes as follows, in his letter to Mr. Stanley:

“With regard to receiving donations, we have never felt ourselves called upon, as a Society, to pronounce any decision. But for myself I may say, that the silver and gold are the Lord's—and whatever comes into our Treasurer's hands may be received as *His* gift. I do not find that the Scriptures warrant us to ask any questions.”

How convenient for men to blame in an opponent what they “do not feel called to pronounce any decision upon” in their own case!

The above dictum of Mr. Thelwall, about gladly taking the money of all sects, was in reply to the Christian Observer's allusion to “the obsolete Dunkers, Muggletonians, and so forth; or Shakers, Southcottians, Swedenborgians, and Irvingites.” Mr. Thelwall may not be aware what led the Christian Observer to go so far a-field about “obsolete sects.” It was in fact the recollection of a passage in the “Statement” of Mr. Thelwall's section of the Society, when arguing against the anti-Irvingite test. “Valentinians,” said they, “Monophysites, Monothelites, Eutychians, with a host whose subtleties many folios would neither explain nor correct, should be deemed ineligible; otherwise the naming one (the Irvingites) is a tacit admission of the eligibility of all the others not named.” This reasoning is unanswerable; but it applies just as much, if two or ten are excepted; for all the rest are thus tacitly endorsed, as is the case in the Trinitarian Bible Society. To exclude two or three heresies only is virtually to say that there are no other heresies.

naturally have led us to prefer it. But no! we would not listen to any such suggestions, from within or from without. (Cheers.) We considered that the Bible is the common inheritance of all Christians—the charter of salvation to all that are in the way of salvation; and that, therefore, it would have been really and truly *an act of schism*, if from any natural feelings and affections, or from any motives of convenience or expediency, we had excluded from labouring with us, in the circulation of that Bible, any who could, on scriptural principles, unite with us therein.

Such was your Secretary's statement in 1832, at Westminster; the following are his non-vacillating proposals in 1839, at Liverpool; as detailed in your Quarterly Extracts. The passage is long; but it is very important, as shewing the elastic qualities of a non-flexible institution.

"Friday, September 7th, the Secretary proceeded to Liverpool, where he was most kindly received by our Treasurer, T. P. Pemberton, Esq., and did not leave till the morning of Tuesday, 18th; but, for want of active co-operation among the clergy, found that very little could be done. The Rev. J. H. Stewart wished that we could unite with the Naval and Military Bible Society—the only Bible Society to which he now subscribes. The clergy generally seemed to desire an exclusively Church of England Bible Society, and would not hear of any union even with the clergy of the Church of Scotland; so that the plan which some of our friends there proposed to us, in their letter of October 24th, 1836, would not have given them, generally, more satisfaction than the present constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society. The Secretary was willing to go to the utmost extent to meet their views, with regard to a local Society,—without giving up *entirely* the principle of Christian union, on which the Trinitarian Bible Society is based, and (with the concurrence of the Committee there) addressed a letter to the clergy, in which the following statement was made.

" To the Clergy of Liverpool.

"It has been deeply lamented that the exertions which are made in Liverpool, for the circulation of the Scriptures, are neither commensurate with the wants of its vast and still increasing population, nor with the zeal and activity which are manifested in the promotion of other religious objects. Some of the facts which have been brought to light, illustrative of the want of the Bible which prevails, demand the most serious consideration, and are truly affecting.

"That the circulation of the Scriptures should be at any time neglected, where the want is so deplorable, would be matter of deep regret. But is it not doubly to be deplored, that so favourable an opportunity of efficiently carrying on the work, should be suffered to pass by unimproved?

"The main difficulty seems to be the want of cordial attachment among the clergy of Liverpool to any one Bible Society, and of that cordial union in the support of *one*, which might put it in a position to carry on the work on an extensive scale. Many are dissatisfied with the British and Foreign Bible Society; many are likewise, though on different grounds, equally dissatisfied with the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, especially when they consider how small a portion of their subscriptions to it would really be applied to the circulation of the Scriptures.

"An Auxiliary to the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed here some time ago, under circumstances which seemed to promise great success and efficiency; but, after a time, a large portion of the Committee and officers withdrew from it, on the ground of its not possessing a more decidedly Church of England character. They felt that it was not desirable, in Liverpool at least, to make any attempt to unite or co-operate with Dissenters; and because the Society was not altogether what they wished, the openings and prospects of usefulness which were before it, and the work which it promised to do, were abandoned, to the deep regret of those subscribers and members of the Committee who still continue to support it; the more so, as it does not appear that any but members of the Established Churches of this kingdom either had joined it, or were likely to do so, in this place. The simple upholding of plain principles of Scriptural truth, which are the basis upon which the Trinitarian Bible Society is formed, had proved sufficient to condemn the conduct of the enemies of our Established Churches, and to keep them aloof from the Society; and the Committee of the Auxiliary had full power to exclude them

*from any interference in the management, even if they had shewn any disposition to come forward.**

"The Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society in London, have mainly lamented that, in consequence of these difficulties and objections, the work of distributing the Scriptures in Liverpool *was left undone*, and opportunities of usefulness are still left unimproved. They have already explained to their friends in Liverpool *their reasons for declining to alter the name of the Society*,† to which no answer has been attempted. But, at the same time, they are anxious to do every thing which is consistent with the maintenance of a position which they deem important (more especially in connexion with the Foreign operations of the Society) to meet the views of their friends and brethren. *They would, therefore, suggest that the Liverpool Auxiliary should make it one of its local laws, that the Committee and Officers of the Auxiliary shall consist exclusively of members of the Established Churches; or (if they prefer it) of members of the Church of England.*‡ The Society in Liverpool would then have a more decidedly Church of England character than either the Church Missionary Society, or that for promoting Christianity among the Jews; for the *management of the Society would be equally restricted to members of the Church, and all the subscribers would, moreover, be pledged to those great fundamental doctrines on which the Church is built, and which her own catechism declares that her members chiefly learn from those Articles of their belief which she requires them to rehearse in coming to her ordinances.*

"At any rate, let the work be done. If there be objections to the Trinitarian Bible Society, which are founded on scriptural and Christian principles that cannot be set aside,—and not merely on points of form and expediency, which may in time be adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties,—then let another Bible Society be formed without delay. The members and Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society will unfeignedly rejoice, if only the work be done on scriptural principles, to the glory of our God and Saviour; and will gladly supply an *Independent Society* with any number of copies of the Scriptures from its Depositary at cost price. And, if the funds collected in Liverpool should be more than are demanded for the supply of local necessities, perhaps such an Independent Society might find hereafter *some specific object* in the Foreign operations of the Trinitarian Bible Society, to which it might *wish* to devote the surplus; while, at the same time, this would be left entirely to its own discretion and Christian feeling.

"*Liverpool, Sept. 15th, 1838.*"

"In the foregoing letter, the local committee certainly went as far to meet the views and feelings of their brethren in Liverpool, as they possibly could do—if not somewhat further than they were warranted in going. Yet, with all this disposition to concession, they gained nothing. And when they found that nothing would satisfy the clergy of Liverpool but an entire surrender of the principle of Christian union, the Secretary came away, with the full persuasion that the wisdom and duty of the Committee is, to keep their present ground, without any alteration of the plan and constitution of the Trinitarian Bible Society, either as to principle or details."

* It were quite superfluous to comment on this letter of your Secretary's, with a view to shew its spirit. What would be said of any other Society, if its committee were imperiously to assume the right to admit or exclude whom they chose from any interference in the management of the Society's affairs? The Trinitarian Society is an oligarchical institution, in which a few individuals in a room, with closed doors, do just what they please. If the subscribers can conscientiously submit to this, they of course have a right to do so; but it is a very arbitrary and un-English proceeding.

† To have "*altered the name*," would have startled the subscribers, and might have led them to look into the working of the Society. Vacillating tests would then have been written on the very brow of the institution; but if without altering "*the name*," the thing could be altered "*under the rose*," there was no concession, even to a rent with the Church of Scotland, which your Secretary was not prepared to recommend and adopt.

‡ Every one of these proposals is in direct opposition to all the most solemnly pledged laws, rules, and regulations of the Society. How Mr. Justice Erskine can lend his respected name to such doings is a marvel to all who know the facts!

After perusing the above pages, can you, sir, pronounce, as President of the Trinitarian Society, that your members are not sinning against God and their neighbour, in traducing Mr. Wilks from London to Bath, and from Yorkshire to Cornwall, upon the authority of your Secretary's pamphlet, as a wilful concoctor of downright conscious falsehoods, as regards "vacillation," "tests," and the statements in the Record newspaper? Might they not in a judgment of charity have supposed that with the above and many more such facts and documents in his recollection, he really believed what he said? A weak-minded man, like Mr. Stanley of Bath, whose sympathies are all one side, may blind himself to believe that black is white; but men whose names have weight ought to beware how they lend them to sanction such gross injustice.

II.—SECOND ALLEGED CONSCIOUS DOWNRIGHT FALSEHOOD.

This alleged falsehood regards the constitution of the Trinitarian Society's Committee. Mr. Wilks took the most dangerous step for proving himself a falsifier, if he is one; for, upon seeing Mr. Thelwall's accusation, he at once referred the question to the Senior and Honorary Clerical Secretary, who would of course wish to uphold, if he could, the statement of his colleague. The following is the correspondence which ensued.

To the Reverend G. Washington Philips.

Dear Sir,—A question has arisen between one of your brother secretaries of the Trinitarian Bible Society and myself, respecting which I cannot write to him, as I do not approve his style of composition: I therefore write to you, and request the favour of a reply at your earliest convenience. I can have no wish to state facts otherwise than as they are: and I should never dream of knowingly misstating them.

The fourth rule of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (of which I am sorry you still decline being a member, as does, it seems, every one of the clergymen on your committee—indeed I cannot ascertain that more than about three of your thirty-eight officers are members of it), is that every member without exception may attend and vote at the monthly meetings. The modern Church Societies admit all clergymen, being members, to attend and vote at the meetings of the committee; in fact to be *committee-men* as well as *members*. Thus Rule XI. of the Church Missionary Society says, "The committee shall consist of twenty-five lay members of the Established Church, and of all such clergymen as are members of the Society." Rule X. of the Prayer Book and Homily Society says: "Twenty-four lay members of the Established Church," and "all clergymen of the Established Church being members of the Society." The same regulation is found, I believe, in all the modern religious Societies. Rule XIII. of the British and Foreign Bible Society says: "Every clergymen or dissenting minister who is a member of the Society shall be entitled to attend and vote at all meetings of the committee." In these institutions all "clerical members" are allowed to be present, and to vote, at meetings of "the committee;"—they are not only members but *committee-men*.

Now Rule VI. of your Society says: "The committee shall consist of twelve ministers of the Gospel of Christ, and twenty-four laymen, being members of the Society." This rule I construed, as did everybody else, to mean that you exclude clerical members, just as much as lay-members, from having a right to attend at the meetings of the committee; that is, at the meetings of the twelve selected ministers and twenty-four laymen. There may chance to be clerical members on the committee (not indeed that there is the slightest guarantee that there shall be even one—for the select "ministers of the gospel" may all be dissenters), but suppose there are four, or six, nay twelve; still clerical *members* have no right to intrude upon those clerical (and lay) *committee-men*. If the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London were to become *members*, they would not be *committee-men*. You might indeed, if you approved of their "qualifications and character," (as Mr. Thelwall states, page 13,) elect them at your next annual meeting to be *committee-men*, excluding two clergymen to make way for them; nay you

might in courtesy allow their visits, without their being committee-men ; but your rules do not give them any right to attend, or any power to vote even when you admitted them by courtesy ; and if twenty-four bishops were to become members, and you wished to give as many of them a voice as your rules will allow, you could only admit half of them ; you must reject the other half ; as well as eject all your present clergymen ; and after all your laymen would "swamp" them twice over.

Now your brother Secretary thinks it due to your Society,—and I quarrel with no man's taste—to inform the members that I have a cause to uphold which I am "conscious can only be maintained by downright falsehoods." The second conscious falsehood he thus states and replies to, page 12. First he quotes my words :

"One of the 'Trinitarian' Society's laws—a law still unrepealed, and unrepealable, unless by newly constituting the Society—justly caused much displeasure and suspicion at the very outset ; we mean that which excludes clerical members from voting at, or even being present at, the proceedings of the committee. The Society has always shrouded its proceedings in secrecy." Mr. Thelwall then comments : "Why was not this law produced ? Why were not the very words of it quoted ? I need not tell you,—for the best of all possible reasons :—because no such law exists, ever did exist, or was ever thought of. All this, and all that follows about 'the *secreta monita* of the provisional conclave,' is nothing else than total falsehood."

Your colleague here says that there is no law which precludes the clerical members of the Society from voting at the committee : that I have penned (excuse my writing such words, they are not mine, but your brother Secretary's) "total falsehoods." He says that I did not produce the law, because there was no such law to produce ; whereas I did not produce it simply because I never imagined that it was a matter on which there could be two opinions. However I have now produced it ; and I assert that Rule VI. was *expressly intended* as an exclusion of "clerical members" from intruding upon your special lay and clerical committee-men ; that their being "members" avails them nothing ; that their *clericity* avails them nothing ; and that not a bishop in England, if the whole bench were members, would have a right to attend and vote at the meetings of your mixed lay and clerical committee-men. I kept the distinction clear between "members" of a society, and an elected committee ; I asserted that a bishop or clergyman has no more right to attend and vote at your board than a layman. Is this a "downright falsehood," a conscious "falsehood," a "total falsehood ?" I re-assert that by Rule VI. you have a private body of your own particular friends to manage your affairs ; (twelve selected ministers and twenty-four selected laymen) ; and that the wholesome check, the wise counsel, and in the case of prelates the fatherly authority, which exist in other Societies, are totally wanting in yours. You are empowered by your Rules to take good care that no "clerical member" shall intrude upon you, whose "character and qualifications" you do not approve ; you do not allow the sun to visit you ; you keep the doors closed. If the Archbishop of Canterbury, as I said, or the Bishop of London, were to become "a clerical member," you could invite him indeed to attend (though not to vote) as "a friend ;"—for I quite believe what Mr. Thelwall says, "There has not been any wish to close the doors against the visits of *their friends* ;" certainly not ; no secretaries or committees wish to exclude those whom they call their friends ; and you might admit a bishop as *your friend*, but he would be only a guest ; not at home.

Mr. Thelwall very triumphantly asks me to produce the excluding law. He knew well enough that I could not produce a negation ; but I produce a law with a significant blank in it. I did not say it enacts, but that it excludes ; it shuts out. By this negation you accomplish what a few active managers of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge used forty years ago to accomplish by uniting together to blackball any man who was not considered one of "their friends." Mr. Simeon was blackballed, because if admitted to membership, he would have had a right to vote and to know what was going on, and he might have been troublesome. Your Rules would have admitted him to membership ; his guinea would have been taken ;—indeed you could not exclude Papists or Socinians, if they chose to send in their guinea, and to hold their tongue ; as your test is only nominal, and not to be enforced—but you could have excluded him from prying into your concerns, if his presence was likely to prove inconvenient to the ruling majority. Nobody but a member of your selected Committee has a right to know what you are saying or doing, except what you please to relate at the annual meeting. If a country "clerical member" came up, concluding that there was no law to exclude him from attending and voting at your Committee, he would find,

unless he was a known "friend" of the managers, that the doors were closed against him ; nor, if admitted, could he vote. I admire the noble principle of the Christian Knowledge Society; though perhaps for peaceful and effective working an elected Committee, with power to every "clerical member" to attend the Committee and vote, is better; but I have an instinctive dislike to committing the management of a religious institution to an oligarchy of laymen. Your laymen can outvote you two to one if they please, and you cannot, without re-moulding your Society, procure a reinforcement of "clerical members."

Now I have repeated my "downright falsehoods," if such they are, in the most unequivocal terms. I mean nothing unkind or disrespectful to yourself; but I wish to ascertain what you admit to be the real facts of the case. Shew me in what my "total falsehood" consists, and I will retract it. I cannot consider your reply *private*; and if you decline a reply, the inference will be that you cannot uphold what your colleague has affirmed and published.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

S. C. WILKS.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

Dear Sir,—I am fearful that the delay which has taken place in replying to your letter of the 9th, may be misconstrued into inattention to yourself, or inability to meet your statement. I send a hasty line to say that it reached me whilst proceeding to a near relative who is dangerously ill, and whose residence I only reached on Friday. In the conclusion of your letter you observe that you must consider my answer public; it will therefore, I conceive, be best to send it in print, which, "if the Lord will," shall be done with least possible delay. In the mean time I must request that I may not be identified with the pamphlet of the Rev. A. S. Thelwall, who alone is responsible for its contents, and therefore best qualified to vindicate or justify them.

Believe me, yours respectfully,

Wednesday, 20th Jan. 1840.

G. W. PHILIPS.

Mr. Wilks replied that when Mr. Philips should answer his letter in print, the letter itself ought to be given entire, which Mr. Philips said should be done, but the reply promised Jan. 20, "if the Lord will, with the least possible delay," has never appeared. But what need was there for one moment's delay; or for a published letter? Mr. Wilks merely asked Yes or No to a plain question. Had he printed a falsehood or not? Mr. Philips knows perfectly well that he had not; but delicacy to his colleague, or some other reason, has hitherto prevented his stating the fact. If he could have said, in three words, that Mr. Thelwall was justified, he might not have been so dilatory. Yet the accusation that Mr. Wilks has falsified is being unremittently circulated by the active members of your Society, to the injury—if it is believed—of a clergyman's character as a man of common veracity.

The objection which Mr. Wilks urged was only to the bigoted exclusiveness and party-spirit of the Society's law; but he might have gone further; and have shewn that even if the law had been better, the practice might still have been as bad, or worse; for your Secretary's official suggestions at Liverpool shew that the Committee pay not the slightest respect to the Society's laws; indeed the chief business of the Society seems to be managed very snugly by Mr. Christian, Mr. Thelwall, and a very few other individuals; a large portion of the Committee very rarely aiding their deliberations, though they are morally responsible for their proceedings. Mr. Thelwall's suggestion to the Liverpool Auxiliary to cast adrift by a new law, first the Evangelical Dissenters, and then, if expedience suggested, the members of the Church of Scotland, though pretty well for a beginning, was not by any means so striking an illustration of the spirit in which the Society's concerns are conducted, as his hint that the Committee might, for the sake of appearance, let the law remain upon paper; but ride over it, in fact, by usurping the place of their constituents. "The Committee of the Auxiliary," said he, "had full power [by might, or cunning,

not right] to exclude them [no matter who the *them* is; whether Episcopal members, or Trinitarians of any other kind] from any interference in the management, even if they had shewn any disposition to come forward." What is the use of pretending to have laws or rules in a Society, just to blind the eyes of the subscribers; when a Secretary and Committee are allowed thus to mock at them? And every-body asks why does the President allow it?

III.—THE THIRD ALLEGED CONSCIOUS DOWNRIGHT FALSEHOOD.

The third alleged downright conscious falsehood relates to an allusion to the Rev. H. Melvill. Here again Mr. Wilks took the readiest course of proving himself a falsifier, if he was one, by writing to Mr. Melvill himself. The following is the correspondence.

St. John's Wood Road, January 25th, 1840.

My dear Sir,—Mr. Thelwall, the Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, has published a pamphlet, in which he lavishes upon me, from his oratorical vocabulary, the sonorous words, "misrepresentations," "slanders," "falsehoods," "total falsehood," "calumny," "rancour," "acting perseveringly the part of an enemy, persecutor, and slanderer;" not fit to be replied to, as not being a "respectable person;" "supporting a cause, which he is conscious can only be maintained by downright falsehoods;" "propagating what he knows to be false;" "a tissue of ignorance, misrepresentation, and falsehood;" "disgracing himself and the cause of the Gospel;" and "uttering more falsehoods in six lines than he (Mr. T.) can refute in so many pages." No. 3 of my "downright falsehoods," which pullulates into two heads, is contained in the following words. "We see no reason to alter our opinion; on the contrary, the experience of seven years has confirmed it. The Rev. H. Melvill, who took a zealous, and we are sure conscientious, share in the formation of the institution, but was soon obliged to quit it—remarked in parting that the Committee, instead of minding their own business, and distributing the word of God, had been employed, from their formation to that hour, in quarrelling and picking holes in private character."

The first head of this double downright wilful conscious falsehood is, that I spoke of you as "soon" withdrawing from the institution. Assuredly this was considered a matter of notoriety at the time; it was the statement of your friends, and of those who acted with you; you had spoken at an early meeting of the Society, but never after; your name was upon the Committee at the formation of the Society in December 1831, and at the publication of the First Report in December 1832; but though in May 1833 you were requested (page 6) to continue your services, "if the Lord will until the period of the annual meeting in May 1834," yet in looking at the list of officers upon that very same leaf (page 5), your name is withdrawn; nor does it appear in 1834, or ever after; and in the discussions which took place respecting forming a Bible Translation Committee of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, and also at the interesting meeting held upon that occasion, you spoke in language which every person construed as expressing that you were not then connected with any other Bible Society. If therefore I am a wilful downright falsifier, I am one of a goodly host.

The second branch of the wilful conscious downright falsehood is that you expressed yourself in strong terms of disapprobation of the proceedings of the Committee. This statement was not originated by me; I knew nothing personally of what passed in the Society; I merely copied from documents published by your own colleagues at the time, and the statement was reprinted in the *Christian Observer* in 1832, page 359, without ever having been challenged or contradicted; and it is rather late, so many years after, and with documents still extant, to assert that I have been inventing wilful falsehoods. I used to be astonished to hear how freely statements were denied which I well knew, from the written attestations of the *opposing parties*, in letters to myself, were correct. I have several of these letters still in my possession; and one I have turned quite accidentally to while looking for *another* paper, in which one of the founders of the Society (mentioning the names of two of its officers) says "——— took the *Christian Observer*, and contradicted what was there stated respecting the turbulent nature of the meetings

in Sackville Street; whereupon ——— remarked to ——— that he was quite astonished at his brass and falsehood, for that every word was strictly true." Again in another letter I read: "All the virulence on the Apocryphal question in Earl Street, is peace itself to the discussions in Sackville Street;" in another, "the discussions here have been violent, personal, and disgraceful;" in another, "they (the party opposed to the writer) have shewn themselves completely unworthy of confidence, and capable of any dirty, shuffling trick." I might dig up heaps of similar documents; assuredly then if the remark ascribed to you (not by me, or in private letters, but in statements published at the time) were not *vera*, it was sufficiently *vraisemblable* to exempt me from the preposterous charge of wilful falsehood in quoting it.

You have no concern with all this, except so far as Mr. Thelwall has appealed to you upon a question involving personal character and veracity; and so far I think you cannot decline favouring me with a reply, *with liberty to make use of it*: and this is my object in troubling you with this letter. For Mr. Thelwall having quoted my words says:

"Now, what are the facts? The Rev. H. Melvill continued to be a member of the Trinitarian Bible Society till April 1837—when he assigned a *totally different reason for leaving us*:—namely, that though we had taken a bold step, we had not gone far enough. But his letter, announcing his wish ~~to~~ withdraw, is a kind and Christian letter:—and (as I deemed it necessary to look at *all* his correspondence with us) I find that every previous letter was of the same character, and expressed the deepest interest in the welfare of the Society. *To charge him then with using such expressions regarding us as those above quoted, is an imputation on his Christian character, which, if he thinks it desirable to refute, it is all very well: but no one else need interfere.*"

Here then Mr. Thelwall appeals to you, as the only person competent to decide the question; with the significant alternative that if you say Yes, you cast "an imputation on your Christian character;" if No, I am a wilful falsifier. There is not the slightest ground for either imputation; the facts are clear enough; and I may add notorious; and there is nothing in them that compromises either your character or my veracity. But as Mr. Thelwall relegates the matter to you, the onus is thrown upon you of doing me justice; and also of sparing me the pain of referring back to documents which there can be no pleasure in reviving. Will you kindly favour me with an early reply?

Allow me however to notice to you the misstatement that lurks in Mr. Thelwall saying that "he assigned a totally different reason for leaving us." Totally different to what? why to the reason which Mr. Thelwall intimates that I had assigned and which constituted a portion of the "downright falsehood." But if you will look at the passage, you will see that I had assigned no reason at all; I only said that you were "obliged to quit it;" and that when you retired from the committee, you gave them some much needed and salutary advice; but I did not say *why* you quitted it; I had no right to do so, for I was not aware that you had published your reasons; nor should I suppose that if you thought the Society's principle quite sound, you would have quitted it just because the Committee had not been perfectly peaceful or judicious. If the principle was good, there was all the more need for you to remain and correct the practice. But so far as by the context I implied anything as to our motive, I actually gave the very motive which Mr. Thelwall says was the true one. For just observe how your name came in? "We see no reason to alter our opinion; on the contrary the experience of seven years has confirmed it." What opinion? Was it that the Society was litigious, and did not confine itself to its own business? This was, alas, too true; but it was not the opinion which had been spoken of, and was referred to. That opinion was, that the Society was not such an institution as the members of the Anglican Church could satisfactorily countenance. I will quote a portion of what went before.

"This ejection of the clergy [from being *ex officio* entitled as members to attend the Committee] was very ominous; and shewed the 'naval and military' views of the Society. Why should not all clergymen who are members of the Society, or bishops, if there should ever be one upon the catalogue, be allowed to be present, as they are, or may be, in the Christian Knowledge Society, and the Bible Society?" Then, after more to the same effect, it was said: "In proof that the objections to the 'Trinitarian' Society's plan and constitution, and especially in the regulation above referred to, are not newly-invented, we will quote a portion of what we said on this head in our volume for 1832, p. 123, where we remarked: 'The Churchman has no guarantee (for all checks are systematically removed)

that the machine may not fall into the hands of Dissenters; and its versions, if ever it should attempt any, be made to speak any particular set of tenets which the conductors for the time being choose. Can any conscientious clergyman join such a Society? a society in which, next year, there may not be a single clergyman, or even a single Churchman, on the Committee? Our readers may be assured that we are not exaggerating in this or any other of our remarks: for the Society's own code of rules is before them, stitched up with our last Number. There is not, we repeat, the slightest security for the Church of England; the word 'clergyman,' or member of the Church of England, is never once mentioned in the rules; and a clergyman has no right, as we have seen, to attend the Committee from his office in virtue of his being a member. He is to pay his guinea, and the secret Committee are to do what they like with it; and if his flock ask him what pledge he can give them that their money will be properly bestowed, and that abuses will not find their way into the Society far greater than those alleged against the old institution, he can only answer that he takes for granted all will be right. He has no confidence in the great body of religious persons of all persuasions watching over each other's movements in an open Committee that keeps no secrets: but he has perfect confidence in the little secret knot of untried gentlemen debating in a close chamber, and with inaccessible books, who, for anything he can know to the contrary, may have other objects in view than the mere circulation of the Scriptures." The passage then went on: "We have no reason to alter our opinion;" and the allusion to your name was sufficiently significative, in connexion with the well-known facts that other clergymen and Anglican laymen who had joined the Society have quitted it, as not being a Society which Churchmen can satisfactorily uphold, and that but recently the Liverpool Auxiliary dissolved itself on this very ground. The mention of your name led, somewhat abruptly, to the other matter; but any person who can discern the working of mind in composition, will see what was the allusion which introduced it. And truly I feel increasingly convinced, after seven years' consideration, that my early impressions were right. Dr. Wolff has lately expressed in print my view *substantially* where he says: "I am decidedly opposed to the Trinitarian Bible Society; for here a set of laymen order their subscribers to sign a creed composed by laymen, which is a most unheard of and impertinent assumption." This is rough-shod; and also not quite accurate; for it is not a "creed," but a fragment of a creed; and it is not "signed" so as really to be a test, but only taken for granted; but *substantially* I agree with Wolff. I must either go farther than the Trinitarian Society, or not so far. If Bible distribution of necessity involves a creed, then I see not why I am to give up Church order any more than Church doctrines; why I am to relinquish the sacraments any more than the word; why I am to be satisfied with admitting Trinitarianism, while I exclude much that is in Scripture connected with it; and I may add, that as a member of the Anglican Church, I do not see why I am to stop short of its fullest requirements, where *any* test is necessary. I have always objected to the half-and-half Trinitarian Society principle, for reasons similar to those which have prevented my uniting myself with the Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign School Society, and many other institutions. Even if I am wrong about the Bible Society, I am sure I am right about the Society called "Trinitarian"—I say "called," for I consider the exclusive epithet invidious.

No bishop is a member of this Society; nor do I see how any bishop could be a member; for the Society sets up a test, yet adopts neither of the three creeds; and excludes the rulers of the Church from attending the meetings of the Committee, except by popular election or Committee suffrance. Mr. Thelwall indeed very courteously intimates, that notwithstanding the exclusive principle of the Society, a bishop might be admitted to the Committee (though not to vote) as a "friend," if Mr. Thelwall and his colleagues were satisfied with his character and qualifications. But believing, as I do, that episcopacy is a Divine ordinance, I consider it to be our duty to regard bishops as appointed spiritual rulers; and I think it argues a mistrust of the government of the Supreme Head of the Church, when laymen refuse to acknowledge ministerial authority, and ministers episcopal authority; of course under the Scriptural limitation "in the Lord." I do not join the Bible Society as a Church; I join it, I approve it, I love it, on other grounds, which appear to me satisfactory; but if I am to have a test at all, I must have it where I worship, and where I communicate. I would unite with a hospital committee to distribute Bibles to the patients; but if the members are to be theologically tested, I must have a fuller test than two or three selected articles, from as many confessions of faith.

Permit me to add also that whereas I considered the Society originally unsound, I now consider it also schismatical; for though we have no Convocation, yet as the whole of our prelates are members of the Christian Knowledge Society, and this institution now directs its labours to foreign as well as home biblical circulation, those members of the Church who cannot conscientiously unite with the Bible Society upon the open principle, should double their subscription to the Church Society; and I doubt not the foreign translations will be as satisfactory under the care of a Howley and a Blomfield, as under Mr. Thelwall and Mr. Washington Philips. I have been an attached member of this Society, as well as of the Bible Society (seeing nothing incompatible in their objects) during a great number of years; and when this special translation fund was being established, I rejoiced to add my humble contribution to it, and I heartily wish that the members of the Church would duly consider its importance. But these things only by the way. All that I solicit your reply to is the question in which my veracity and character are concerned; and for the solution of which the public are referred to you by Mr. Thelwall. First, was I guilty of "downright falsehood," when I spoke of your early withdrawal? Secondly, was I guilty of downright falsehood when I quoted from the printed statements of your friends at the time of your disapprobation of the proceedings?

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

S. C. WILKS.

To the Rev. S. C. Wilks.

Brighton, January 29, 1840.

My Dear Sir,—I was engaged yesterday with preaching a sermon at the consecration of a new church in this town, otherwise there should not have been delay in my reply to your letter addressed to me at Camberwell.

I greatly regret the controversy which has arisen between yourself and Mr. Thelwall, though of course it does not become me to enter into its merits.

I have never been appealed to directly by Mr. Thelwall; but a friend of his wrote to me, and my reply was with the understanding that it might be communicated to him. I cannot, therefore, be chargeable with any undue interference, if I make now substantially the same statements as the reply contained.

I do not remember, accurately, the date of my separation from the Trinitarian Bible Society. But I left the Committee before I left the Society; and I ceased to be a member at, or soon after, the formation of the Foreign Translation Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

My reason for quitting the Society was, that I had reached the conviction that Churchmanship ought to be the single test of membership.

As to my reason for quitting the Committee, I cannot say whether or no I had used the precise words which you have put into my mouth; but it grieves me to add, that my recollections of what took place will not warrant my repudiating them on the ground of inaccuracy or falsehood.

I do not know that there is any other point in your letter which requires a reply; for I decline touching the question of the laws and constitution of the Trinitarian or of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

It will be understood from the above, that Mr. Thelwall has assigned my true reason for quitting the Society: but that reason did not withdraw me from the Committee.

I remain, my dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

HENRY MELVILL.

Mr. Melvill thus confirms Mr. Wilks's statement. He speaks, indeed, with delicacy and kindness of the colleagues whom he felt it his duty to quit; but he laments to say that "he cannot repudiate" what was asserted "on the ground of inaccuracy or falsehood." And yet Mr. Stanley, and other of the most active members and officers of this Society, think themselves justified, as gentlemen and Christians, in circulating and vindicating Mr. Thelwall's assertions; and even Mr. Justice Erskine, though personally blameless, is in public opinion a concurring party.

IV.—FOURTH ALLEGED CONSCIOUS DOWNRIGHT FALSEHOOD.

THIS falsehood is described as follows:—

"The late Rev. E. Irving, one of the chief founders of the Trinitarian Society."

This assertion is made by the nameless correspondent of the *Christian Observer*: but we must hold the Editor himself responsible for it, till we know to whom else to ascribe it. It is another specimen of downright falsehood. Mr. Irving had no more to do with the foundation of the Trinitarian Bible Society than with the foundation of St. Paul's Cathedral. His name does not even appear upon the Provisional Committee."

This "nameless correspondent" is nameless no longer; for he has allowed his name to be made known. He is Mr. F. Sargent (the brother of H. Martyn's biographer), and as he was himself a member of the Trinitarian Society at its outset, he can judge as accurately as Mr. Thelwall respecting Mr. Irving's influence in the affair. If Mr. Sargent had meant that he was on the Provisional Committee, he would have been incorrect; but morally and potentially he was a powerful agent in the business; and the Editor of the *Record* justly stated, April 26, 1832, that it was only by the strenuous exertions of the orthodox minority that he was kept out of the Committee into which so many of his friends were admitted. To assert that he had no more to do with the matter than with "the foundation of St. Paul's Cathedral" is truly an astounding statement. But even if Mr. Sargent's remark were incorrect, the Editor of the *Christian Observer* could not in any fairness be accused of wilful deception in admitting the declaration of one so well qualified to state what happened. It were superfluous to say that Mr. Sargent is incapable of "downright falsehood." He has written to the Editor stating facts and conversations which he considers fully justified his remark; but as he did not happen to mention whether his communication was to be used, it is considered confidential. But without quoting private letters, some curious passages shall be added from a pamphlet published by him in 1837, entitled "A Sketch of Irvingism, addressed to the Rev. G. W. Philips, Honorary Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society." They will shew still further how unjustifiable is Mr. Thelwall's imputation of falsehood to those who speak of the Irvingite addictions which troubled the Society; and though Irvingism is now in the shade, and there are none of the falsely alleged tongues and miracles by which some of the leaders in the Trinitarian Society were so bewildered, yet no person of common prudence would trust the judgment of such persons in making or correcting versions of the Scriptures, or managing the affairs of a Bible Society.—Mr. Sargent wrote as follows, addressing Mr. Washington Philips:—

"At the juncture to which I have just adverted, commenced the insane prophecies and utterances in the National Scotch Church. I had no curiosity to hear them, being an utter sceptic, and I foresaw, without the gift of prophecy, that the angel of that Church would at last seize one of the pillars of it in the supernatural strength of Sampson, and pull it down upon his own head, and that of his flock, which soon happened. To this particular manifestation, as so called, you frequently directed my unheeding notice, and indeed it absorbed as much of your own thoughts and converse as the formation of the Trinitarian Bible Society. You often listened in private and public to the one, and you as often attended committees of the other. With these committees, to which I was altogether a stranger, you always expressed yourself dissatisfied, because about half their number were opposed to any introduction of these miraculous gifts, and to that creed and practice, which has since been significantly termed 'Irvingism.'

"Mr. Irving's book, called 'Christ's Holiness in the Flesh,' now made its appearance, to which you did not assent, but you reconciled the difficulty of its consistency with your belief in the miraculous utterances, by the supposition that Mr. I. was a wild and careless thinker, speaker, and publisher, and that he did not really hold the doctrines which he broached; though he differed from all the Reformed Churches who held the Scriptural truth of our Lord's deity and humanity. This was a charitable interpretation on your part, for no man can read the heart of another; but your charity is of a very limited order, confining itself to those crested birds of your own feather, and the work itself was unquestionably

heretical and scandalous, which threw the newly-formed Trinitarian Bible Society into a cauldron of boiling water.

"A general, or rather special, meeting was summoned, when the doctrine was discussed. Some of Mr. Irving's followers presented themselves, and foremost in the vanguard Mr. Henry Drummond, who vehemently arraigned the impugners of Irving's orthodoxy. One described this constitutional Society as his child, and another vociferated it to be his offspring, till at last you claimed the royal progeny as your's, and it became the heir presumptive or apparent to the British crown; while I renounced all claim, who had advanced none, being myself in no way responsible for its failure or success. Much more in ideal vision you seemed to stand upon the globe itself, and to hold the sceptre in your right hand. *Mr. I. himself kept aloof from the scene of action in supreme contempt of all Societies.*" Some of the Irvingites asserting that they held the doctrine of Three co-eternal Persons in the unity of one Godhead, though such is the imperceptible progress of error, that they themselves have been involved in the meshes of the same heterodox net, the majority of the meeting voted for their membership, upon which decision the dissentient party withdrew.

"The Society was now divided into two Committees, each claiming its own right and title; and I determined that I would have no connection at all with either, being only desirous in Christian charity of drawing my brethren out of their delusion, and uniting them to those of whose faithful orthodoxy I cordially approved, but which task I soon found to be hopeless. Belonging myself, however, to a District visiting Society, which was prejudiced even against the Bibles issued from the depot in Earl Street, Blackfriars, but which to this day I have never quitted, I purchased of Major Close £5 worth of Bibles in ruddy bindings from Sackville Street, while I did not care myself one farthing from what warehouse they came. As he insinuated to me that my one-pound or guinea donation was barely sufficient to indemnify the Society, which had sold me the books at a reduction of price, I gave you or him another guinea, as a subscription, which I judged to be a fair compensation. He soon after resigned his lay-secretaryship, was succeeded by Mr. H. C. Christian, and the Society appeared *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, or par excellence, in large letters against the walls of Exeter Hall. *You told me that you estimated a Trinitarian Bible as carrying with it a manifest divine virtue, and that the very name was given by immediate revelation.* One such book, through faith of the giver, was worth a million of faithless books; as if you could possibly prove that out of that million all had been distributed both by and to infidels. It so happened, that some of your own stock, which I gave away according to your prescription, were pawned, and the profits spent at the gin-shop during the cholera season. The inscription, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men,' was stamped upon the outside cover, and the words 'Trinitarian Bible Society established,' with the date imprinted within, and you regarded the Lord's prime, if not sole, favour as resting upon the institution. You considered also miraculous truth as triumphant, and that the Society was vested with the blessings and curses of Ebal and Gerizzim. You invited all to enrol their names under its banners, at the peril of their souls if they disobeyed, and to their everlasting saintship, if they obeyed, so that conformity or non-conformity to it was tantamount to a belief or disbelief in the Gospel."

"*Having no capabilities of translating the Bible into the modern languages under heaven, you were obliged again, as a shift, to have recourse to the voice of the Spirit, which was speaking in the Churches.* 'Now,' you observed, 'we will have the miraculous gifts.' I thought it high time, in an isolated monumental elegy over yourself,

'To leave you alone in your glory.'

"I should have before mentioned, that the Irvingites regarded you as their grand ally, and asked you to write in one of their periodicals, which you declined, because

* This remark explains what Mr. Sargent meant in the Christian Observer. He did not say that Mr. Irving was on the Committee; but he spoke of his personal influence and the influence of his principles. That erratic man was a trumpeter, though he did not carry a firelock; he reprobated the Earl Street Bible Society as having well nigh committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost; and he not only consented to the formation of the other, but his particular friends Mr. Drummond and Mr. Washington Philips, entreated that Mr. Irving and his disciples might be connected with it. To say that he had no more to do with the formation of the Society than with the building of the Cathedral of St. Paul, is to speak in Mr. Thelwall's accustomed manner.

you could not accord with all which Mr. Irving had written, or might write. You denounced 'The Record' newspaper, as a worldly and wicked publication, which I believe to be a sound and well-written religious and political journal, but which pretends not to be an infallible and perfect oracle, and which is only published twice a week, but has an increasing sale. You started a periodical, having a few contributors, entitled 'The Christian Record,' being a tirade against all others; in which you descanted on the distinction between a miracle, a sign, and a wonder, being anxious to establish all three, but failing *in toto*; and which, after the novelty of the first number, was defunct, about the same time that Irvingite literature ceased.

"When the Rev. Mr. Armstrong visited you, you expressed your agreement with him in his views, and approved of the proceedings which had taken place in Bentinck Chapel, where he had introduced those miraculous gifts. He considered you as his brother in the apostolic ministry, gave you a printed sermon of his own on the subject of them, and which you handed to me for my perusal; declaring to me, in his presence, that I should go to the devil, as well as others who rejected them, and especially the dissentients from the Trinitarian Institution.

"Your nephew, the Rev. A. Tharp, you encouraged for successive days to rise at break of morn to listen to these gifted individuals, whom you regarded as super-eminent Christians, notwithstanding the confessed and proved imposture of some of them; and you remarked a reverential change in him towards yourself, since he became an Irvingite. On his return, I asked your nephew, whether being in his senses, he could believe that in reality such a spiritual voice resembled the day of Pentecost. With tears in his eyes, he replied, 'Who can doubt it?' You referred me to chapter and verse in the Acts of the Apostles, in illustration and corroboration of it. You asserted to me your own persuasion, in these words, 'Those persons are possessed by the Holy Ghost;' and you were as sure as you had a pen in your hand, that I was possessed with the devil. You threatened to turn me out of your house, because I was an unbeliever in this mystical utterance, this sovereign unction for national and domestic woes. You seated yourself upon a private chair of ecclesiastical state, and wore at the same time the rough prophetic garment, under the expectation that you might yourself exercise these gifts; and indeed told me that you had once worked a miracle upon your own servant, the facts of which, whether credible or not, I had no means of investigating, while you condemned the infidelity of the Christian Observer for doubting that of Miss Fancourt. The circumstance of the late Rev. Mr. Maingy, a friend of yours, at Guernsey, the account of whose death you published, and described as having uttered some truly pious and unaffected ejaculations, with preternatural strength, in a moment of extreme debility, between life and death, so wrought upon your mind, and also some marked circumstances of your own conversion, that you judged such occurrences to be the prelude of investing the church with a systematic miraculous power under the present dispensation. With the millennium to come, wrapt as it is in much speculative intricacy and obscurity as to manner and time, you rarely meddled; your attention being wholly engrossed with the one exaggerated object of the Trinitarian Institution. Irvingism, therefore, was just suited to your own predisposition, and you were actuated by the notion that the period was now arrived."

"The spirit in Mr. Irving's Church having cursed the Bible Society, and superseded even the word of God itself, like Dominus Dens of Louvain University, foreboded that the Trinitarian Institution would only compass the earth to make a proselyte, which last was more true than the first, notwithstanding other repeated prophetic failures." "You hinted to me your anticipation that your Society would become the universal Church over Christendom, of which you had been the personified founder and head, or an ark of safety after destruction had overwhelmed the rest."

"You advised me also to try the experiment of becoming an Irvingite, just before I escaped happily from your house, in the beginning of the year 1834. Partly by your auspices, Lieut. Skinner, assistant Secretary of the Naval and Military Bible Society, has since pursued the course from which I declined. Indeed Dr. R. of Hanover Square, who is an Irvingite, told me himself, 'Mr. Phillips is one of us, and is only waiting for an opportunity to join us;' adding that were I not a lodger of your's he would not admit me, and even then only very seldom as a promising evangelical, into his private society, which I never sought, and have never regretted. I had been too long behind the scenes to become myself an actor; but at his suggestion I went once to Newman Street, that I might practically convince myself of what before I knew to be madness and spiritual deceit, and I wrote to him afterwards to say that I rejected it altogether."

"What I have here attested, and could attest in a court of justice, has so many more living witnesses than myself, and was a transaction of such lengthened duration, that I think my own evidence cannot be questioned. You have often endeavoured of late to induce me to rejoin your favourite institution, both by appeals from the pulpit, without any advertisement of such sermons, by private admonition, and through the intervention of friends, notwithstanding my own negative resolution, and long may you govern it with paternal sway. I have as often sought to obtain from you an answer to the question, whether you are a believer in the inspired Shechinah in Newman Street, or whether you see it in the same light as other sensible and honest Christians, but in vain."

V.—FIFTH ALLEGED CONSCIOUS WILFUL FALSEHOOD.

With regard to this alleged wilful falsehood, so far from the parties charged pleading guilty to it, they plead guilty to not being able to make out in what it consists. Mr. Thelwall had said, at your annual meeting last year :

"What versions may be truly considered as the word of God may be illustrated by an anecdote. I recollect several years ago, some time before the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed, that, in a large company, two clergymen, and both of them very warm friends of the British and Foreign Bible Society, came up to me, in a manner which indicated that they had something very important to say; and one of them asked me this question, 'Is the Septuagint the word of God?' I answered instantly, 'No! certainly it is not.' He seemed to draw back with some surprise, and remarked to the other, 'He says that it is not!' 'And pray may I beg leave to ask your reason for saying so?' It happened providentially that I had for some time before been making the Septuagint the subject of my very particular study, and noting down every variation from the original Hebrew; I was therefore fully prepared to give a decisive answer, and I said, 'Because I find that many things are added which are not in the original Hebrew, many omitted which are, and many other things are strangely and needlessly altered; and I find that errors and deviations of one or all these kinds occur in every page.' I have lately been looking into my copy of the Septuagint, and find that I had gone regularly through it, as far as the Second Book of Kings, and what I then said is fully confirmed; there is not a page, nor a column, in which such deviations are not noted. I was fully warranted, therefore, to answer as I did. And wherever similar remarks can be made on any version—not because there are imperfections, but because we find that it is made upon false principles, and that there is no conscientious endeavour, under a solemn sense of the authority of the word of God, and of the responsibility of those who translate it, to keep as close to the plain meaning of the original as the nature of language will admit,—then we say that such versions cannot be considered as the word of God."

The Editor of the *Christian Observer*, with this passage full in recollection, said, "A version which Mr. Thelwall pronounces—not in regard to particular mistakes, but as a whole and without any qualification—not to contain the word of God." Whereupon Mr. Thelwall exclaims, "Here is another falsehood of a most reprehensible character." "The *Christian Observer* knows how to alter and garble a statement in order to serve his purpose." There certainly could be no intention to garble to serve a purpose, for the writer cannot even now, with Mr. Thelwall's help, discover what the garbling was, or the "reprehensible falsehood," or the purpose to be served by it. He had just quoted Mr. Thelwall's own words, as above re-quoted, and must therefore have been an extreme simpleton to pen falsehoods, and to affix the means of convicting him of them. Mr. Thelwall says something about "contain," and "is," which he prints in Italics; but both will equally "serve the purpose" for which the remark was made; or, if there be any difference, "is" would do so better than "contain." It cannot be said that any version, however excellent, "is" strictly "the word of God;" it is a translation, not the inspired text;

a fac-simile, not the original ; but if it " contains," or embodies, or transfuses, the true meaning, that is all that can be expected. To ground a charge of wilful " falsehood of a most reprehensible character," upon a quibble about " is " and " contains," when every reader must see that the intention was to convey Mr. Thelwall's opinion, his own words having also been fairly quoted, is really so absurd that one wonders how any man could venture to print it. Nay, in the very next page, the *Christian Observer*, twice repeating the remark, used Mr. Thelwall's own expression, " to be called (considered) the word of God." But with those whose " sympathies " lead them to look only at one side, a strong assertion answers as well as a strong argument.

The five accusations of downright conscious falsehood having now been gone through, it is confidently asserted that there was not even a mistake or misapprehension : but to charge *conscious downright falsehood*, is, to say the least, to speak in a very Thelwallian manner.*

The above remarks being defensive, not aggressive, your Secretary's own statements have not been canvassed, otherwise it were easy to turn the tables, and to shew how open they are to the kind of charges which he urges against others. To go no farther than this very matter of the Septuagint. How came the *Christian Observer* to refer to Mr. Thelwall's remarks upon that version ? The argument was this : that it is the duty of Bible Societies to distribute the word of God in as pure a form as they are able ; but that all versions are imperfect ; that the Septuagint is " exceedingly faulty," and, if Mr. Thelwall's estimate of it be admitted, faulty far beyond any version which the Bible Society ever set forth ; yet that the inspired writers frequently used the readings in that very version. What party purpose could the *Christian Observer* have to serve, in his remarks upon the Septuagint ? It is not circulated by the Bible Society or the Christian Knowledge Society ; and the worse it is, the better for his argument ; which was to shew that, as the inspired writers used it, a very

* Mr. Thelwall, in the course of his remarks under the fifth head of accusation, says that the Editor of the *Christian Observer* " seems disposed to treat with supercilious contempt the position that Romanists are not sound Trinitarians." The *Christian Observer* never used the epithet " sound," which Mr. Thelwall foists in, according to his usual manner, to prepare a statement the better for confutation. The *Christian Observer* merely said that Romanists " adhere to the three creeds, the Athanasian as much as the others." They call themselves " Trinitarians ;" they would unhesitatingly sign your Society's five selected " Articles of Faith," which, your documents assert over and over again, contain all that essentially marks out Trinitarianism ; but they are not Trinitarians, you say, because they believe in four persons in the Godhead. " Do not the Papists in fact," says Mr. Thelwall, " make the Virgin Mary a fourth person in the Trinity ?" And mark, sir, the qualifying words " in fact ;" because they shew the convenience of slipping in the word " sound." Mr. Thelwall may explain : I did not say Trinitarians by profession, and after a sort, but not *sound* Trinitarians, as " in fact," they oppose the creeds which they profess to adopt. But neither did the *Christian Observer* say " sound " Trinitarians, or sound any thing. Your Irvingitish members were not " sound " Trinitarians. Can you say that this foisting in of the significant word " sound " was right ? If it be true that the arguments which sway excited minds are seldom those which satisfy a " sound " judgment, your Society ought in these days of excitement to be very flourishing, for there are many who are easily led away with *ad captandum* assertions. The Church of England justly accounts the Romanists idolatrous ; but not because they believe there are four persons in the Trinity, but because, though they do not account the Virgin Mary or the saints, gods, or goddesses, they pay adoration to them which belongs only to God.

defective version—if not wilfully corrupt—is infinitely better than none. But your Secretary omits to mention that the whole passage was an *argumentum ad hominem* to himself, and leaves the impression that the Christian Observer was patron-general of corrupt versions. Take two short sentences as specimens in parallel columns.

Mr. Thelwall's representation.

"When he so highly commends the Septuagint, it is far from clear that he knows what he is commending."

Christian Observer's words.

"The Septuagint is faulty enough—*exceedingly* faulty—though Mr. Thelwall's statement is a gross exaggeration of its demerits."

To say that a translation is "faulty," "EXCEEDINGLY faulty," but that its "demerits" have been aggravated, is *high commendation*! But you may justly ask, sir, in astonishment at the manner in which your Secretary states things, was this really all that the Christian Observer said? The best answer will be to transcribe the passage, which, though long, contains some matters so important to the whole question between your Society and the general body of Christians, that it may not be unworthy of your attention.

"The Septuagint is faulty enough—*exceedingly* faulty—but Mr. Thelwall's statement is a gross exaggeration of its demerits. But let this pass; suppose it were as bad as he says; nay a thousand-fold worse than the Latin Vulgate and its vernacular progeny. Then we ask the following questions. Why does Mr. Thelwall stand up in church every Sunday, and read the Psalms translated from it before God and the congregation; or does he act consistently, and burn the Anglican Prayer Book in the same furnace which is to destroy the Bible Society's versions? Again: how does he exempt the apostles, and probably our blessed Lord himself, from his censure, in making use of, and quoting from, so detestably wicked a book, as if it were the word of God? We can fashion no answer to this inquiry, which does not prove that an indifferent translation may be lawfully made use of in default of a better, without any induction of responsibility for all its renderings. The question is either one of degree or one of mathematical strictness. Let the Trinitarian committee take their choice. If they say that it is one of mathematical strictness, so that no version can be lawfully read or distributed in which there is a single mistranslation, then they cannot lawfully read or distribute any version ancient or modern; nay, nor the Hebrew or Greek originals, since no person who knows anything of the matter is so ignorant as to suppose that there is a single copy extant which can be pronounced to contain a perfectly immaculate text. The various readings of manuscripts often amount to scores in a page; and though no copy perhaps is so faulty as not to correct in one text the misreading in another, so that no one point of faith or practice is in danger from the inevitable varieties of transcripts (for we implicitly believe the watchful providence of God in the conservation of His word, though he allows us bitterly to feel the effects of human frailty, the fruit of sin), yet no member of the Trinitarian committee would venture to assert, of any written or printed Bible extant, that he believes that every word and letter in it is precisely a copy of the inspired original.

"But if the committee say that they do not lay claim to this extreme strictness; that they admit that all copies are incorrect, and all translations fallible; and that it is a question of degree whether or not a version is fit to be read or distributed; then they give up the whole argument. Unless they think that the Apostles and the early church did very wrong in using a version which Mr. Thelwall pronounces—not in regard to particular mistakes, but as a whole, and without any qualification—not to contain the word of God; and that the Protestant reformers and churches had better have had no Bible than the Latin Vulgate, or vernacular translations grounded upon it; and that even the Church of England, and all her institutions, are guilty of great sin in using and circulating a version which may contain mistakes, and some perhaps considerable—they have no warrant to anathematise the Bible Society for printing, as in the main good and useful, certain versions against portions of which very grave objections may be urged.

"The Bible Society does not print the Septuagint; but we have noticed Mr. Thelwall's remarks upon it, in order so shew the untenableness of the 'Trini-

tarian' Society's style of reasoning. The case of the Septuagint is commensurate in its bearings with the case of modern versions and reprints. The reader has seen what Mr. Thelwall is pleased to assert of this celebrated translation; yet it was anciently read in the Jewish synagogues, and also in the churches of the early Christians. 'It is uniformly cited,' remarks Mr. Hartwell Horne, 'by the early fathers, whether Greek or Latin; and from this version all the translations into other languages which were anciently approved by the Christian church were executed, with the exception of the Syriac.' 'How extensively,' adds Mr. Horne, 'this version was in use among the Jews, appears from the solemn sanction given to it by the inspired writers of the New Testament, who have in very many passages quoted this Greek version of the Old Testament.' We need not go on to prove, what no man denies, that the Septuagint was the sacred text-book of the Christian Fathers; the text read, quoted, and commented on by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Basil; and afterwards by Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory. The reader may find, in Mr. Horne's work, an elaborate table of "quotations from the Septuagint version in the New Testament." 'The inspired writers,' he says, 'very frequently made their citations from the Septuagint, even where this translation from the Hebrew is inaccurate, but where the errors are of such a nature as not to weaken the proofs for which they were alleged.' We cannot attempt in a note to sketch even the outlines of a subject upon which thousands of pages have been written; and the better informed of the 'Trinitarian' committee must know perfectly well that the class of persons whom their specious, but baseless, arguments are likely to influence, are profoundly ignorant of such matters; and think it quite enough that Mr. Thelwall has an immaculate Hebrew text, of which he is an immaculate translator; and that, therefore, upon his authority the Septuagint is what he describes it to be, and has no claim to be called the word of God; being 'made upon false principles,' with 'no conscientious endeavour, under a solemn sense of the authority of God, and of the responsibility of those who translate it, to keep as close to the plain meaning of the original as the nature of language will admit.' Let Mr. Thelwall settle this matter with the New Testament writers, who make such frequent use of a version thus deliberately false, and having, Mr. Thelwall being the judge, 'errors and deviations in every page.'

"If the reader wishes to examine the question, he may turn to Mr. Horne, who has given the outlines, and referred to the chief writers on the subject for details; or should he happen to have our volumes for 1810 and 1811 in his hands, he will find a series of papers from the pen of our venerable correspondent Thomas Scott, in refutation of Dr. Adam Clarke, who had affirmed that the whole of the New Testament quotations from the Old are, without exception, taken from the Septuagint. Mr. Scott considered that statement too sweeping; he thought that the number was exceedingly small of those citations in which the Septuagint 'materially' differed from the Hebrew; that where the difference was 'immaterial,' a considerable number are evidently taken from the Septuagint; and that in a large proportion the quotations are 'so consonant in meaning to the Hebrew, though the words of the Septuagint are used with some variations, that it is not easy to say whether the sacred writers intended to quote the Septuagint or to translate the Hebrew; but being conversant in the Septuagint, the words of that version occurred to them in translating.' He asks whether, when a passage decidedly accords with the Septuagint, and differs from the Hebrew, it might not be, 'as the Septuagint alone was familiar to the readers of the Epistles, and no harm would arise from the deviation, that the sacred writer saw good to take the passage as he found it.' On these questions we enter not; we only wish to shew how much Mr. Thelwall, in writing as he does, is pleased to presume upon the ignorance of his readers. Mr. Scott, though combating Dr. A. Clarke's over-statement, yet says:—

"Far be it from me to speak of the Septuagint as not venerable, or as entitled to small authority in determining the true reading or meaning of the Old Testament. It is indeed exceedingly venerable; as the most ancient version ever made of the Hebrew Scriptures, and as the only one extant in the days of Christ and the Apostles. It was at that time, I apprehend, in universal use among the Hellenists, or Jews, dispersed through the nations who spake the Greek language; and read in their synagogues: and, no doubt, it was commonly received and used by the churches of the Gentiles converted to Christianity. Nay, more: I am of opinion that this translation of the Sacred Oracles, into the language at that time most generally cultivated of any on earth, was one grand means, in the hand of Providence, of preparing the minds of very many Gentiles to expect a great Deliverer from Judea, and of welcoming him when preached to the nations.'

"Those who prefer the judgment of the Secretary of the 'Trinitarian' Society to that of Mr. Scott, are not likely to be convinced by any arguments or authorities which we could adduce; we will, however, add the sentiments of the translators of King James's Bible, which every true member of the Church of England will think entitled to some consideration. They say in their preface:—

" 'While God would be known only in Jacob, and have his name great in Israel, and in none other place; while the dew lay on Gideon's fleece only, and all the earth besides was dry; then for one and the same people, which spake all of them the language of Canaan, that is, Hebrew, one and the same original in Hebrew was sufficient. But when the fulness of time drew near, that the Son of righteousness, the Son of God, should come into the world, whom God ordained to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, not of the Jew only, but also of the Greek, yea, of all them that were scattered abroad; then, lo, it pleased the Lord to stir up the spirit of a Greek prince (Greek for descent and language), even of Ptolemy Philadelph, king of Egypt, to procure the translating of the Book of God out of Hebrew into Greek. This is the translation of the Seventy Interpreters, commonly so called, which prepared the way for our Saviour among the Gentiles, by written preaching, as St. John Baptist did among the Jews by vocal.

" 'It is certain that the translation was not so sound and so perfect, but that it needed in many places correction; and who had been so sufficient for this work as the apostles or apostolic men? Yet it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them, to take that which they found (the same being for the greatest part true and sufficient), rather than by making a new, in that new world and green age of the Church, to expose themselves to many exceptions and cavillations, as though they made a translation to serve their own turn, and therefore bearing witness to themselves, their witness not to be regarded. This may be supposed to be some cause why the translation of the Seventy was allowed to pass for current.'

"So thought our translators; and what would they have said if they had been told that the version which they believed the *Holy Ghost* had stirred up Ptolemy to cause to be made, and which prepared the way for the coming of Christ, was a deliberately dishonest and wicked version, and cannot, after allowing for human imperfection, be called the *word of God*. Such exaggerated statements may call forth shouts of 'Hear, hear,' at 'Trinitarian' Society meetings; but they prove nothing but a strange obliquity of judgment in him who makes them. They however shew how little weight is to be attached to the kindred declamations respecting the Bible Society."

This extract will suffice to shew how incompetent your Secretary is to the office of passing judgment upon versions, for the guidance of a Bible Society. Is it possible, sir, that you can consider his remarks upon the Septuagint as the well-advised dictate of a calm judgment? Just see how he settles learned matters with a dash of the pen. The Christian Observer had said that our Lord and his disciples made much use of the Septuagint. Your Secretary replies, "When our Lord ever used, or could use, the Septuagint, I would fain learn. This is the first time I ever heard of his using the Greek language. But let that pass."

No, it shall not pass. It is merely an appeal to the ignorance of the reader. The Christian Observer, of course, never said that our Lord spoke Greek; but the New Testament is written in Greek, and our Lord's words are therefore translated into Greek: and the words so handed down by inspired authority, are in numerous places not a new translation from the Hebrew, but literal citations from the Septuagint version; that version which your Secretary pronounces "is not the word of God;" which has errors or deviations, additions or omissions "in every page," so far as he had "happened providentially" to have been collating it; adding, "Wherever similar remarks can be made on any version—not because there are imperfections, but because we find that it is made *upon false principles*, and that there is *no conscientious endeavour under a solemn sense of the authority of the word of God*, and of the responsibility of those who translate it, to keep as close to the meaning of the original as the nature of language will admit—then we say that such versions cannot be considered as the word of God."

Undoubtedly not : but no version published by the Bible Society is such a version ; and if the Septuagint was such a version, it seems remarkable that it should be quoted so many times in the New Testament, and this not only when it corresponds with the Hebrew, but in numerous places in which it differs from it.

Then as to our Lord's quotations from the Old Testament, though he did not speak Greek, the inspired writers render his words in numerous instances by quotations taken verbatim from the Septuagint ; and the Christian Observer considered these still our Lord's words, as given in the inspired text, though in a different tongue. Even, therefore, where the sense is the same in the Hebrew and the Septuagint, the inspired writers seem to have put more honour upon the latter by so frequently quoting it, than your Secretary does. But this is not all ; for if you will turn to Matthew xv. 9, you will find the inspired writer declaring that Jesus answered the Scribes and Pharisees that Esaias said, " In vain do they worship me ;" whereas those words are not found in the Hebrew, but are taken from the Septuagint. Poole says, " These words are not in the Hebrew or Chaldee, but were inserted by the Seventy." Scott the commentator remarks, " The quotation is here *nearly* in the words of the Septuagint, which in some things varies from the Hebrew text ; especially by adding, *as a comment*, ' in vain do they worship me ;' which comment it seems our Lord sanctioned."

Much more might be added ; but the above may serve to shew that the Editor of the Christian Observer knew perfectly well what he meant when he spoke of our Lord's using the Septuagint. He of course meant not that our Lord spoke Greek, but that his quotations are very frequently given by inspired authority in the words of the Septuagint ; and the above is an instance in which his words so given *are not in the Hebrew*. If Mr. Thelwall did not know all this, what is to be affirmed of his competency for his office ? If he did, what is to be affirmed in another respect ?

But perhaps, sir, you will say that this question presents considerable difficulties. It does ; and so do many other things connected with biblical translation and criticism. And here, sir, your Society is doing irreparable mischief. Your Secretary's reckless line of argument, in the passage above quoted, is an appeal from wise men to rash men ; from the cautiousness of the learned, to the ignorance or vanity of the unlearned. Let him clear up, if he can, to an unlettered audience, the difficulty of such a passage as that above alluded to. Mr. Scott says that our Lord adopted a comment from the Seventy, and " seems to have sanctioned it." Is this, or is any other solution which has been suggested, without difficulty ? Can Mr. Thelwall satisfy an unlettered audience as to his reasons for reading in the desk (Psalm cv. 28), " They were not obedient unto his word ;" and in the pulpit, " They rebelled not against his word : " or Psalm lxxii. 15, in the desk, from the Septuagint version, " Prayer shall be made *unto* Him : " and in the pulpit, from the Hebrew, " Prayer shall be made *for* Him." Such discrepancies are perplexing and distressing to Christian scholars : but to pretend that unlettered men can perfectly understand them, is fallacious flattery. The Holy Spirit does not make every believer a philologist ; nor is it necessary for his soul's health or salvation to be so.

The writer of the letters to Mr. Brandram, signed T. H., justly comments upon this matter ; and your Secretary, addressing Mr. Stanley, who is probably no great scholar, replies to him. The remarks of T. H., and those of your Secretary, shall be given in parallel columns. The latter are well calculated to ensure cheers in a popular assembly ; but every biblical scholar knows that they are worthless as argument.

T. H. to Brandram.

"If the cause be tried before learned and competent judges, an honourable acquittal must be pronounced. It is your misfortune, that the cause will not thus be tried—nor was it intended by its originators to be determined in this manner. Could I doubt the Christian integrity of your accuser, I should say, that the whole showing of the case has been got up, not for the instruction of those who are conversant with the history and principles of biblical criticism, but as a mere appeal to popular ignorance. One bold assumption reigns throughout the pamphlet of Mr. Thelwall, viz. That the English authorized version is so exact to the original, so entirely pure as to the text upon which it is founded, so free from party-bias on the minds of its translators, that ('making,' as he says, 'due allowance for human imperfection,') it ought to be received as a standard by which to judge the merits of every other translation. Another assumption necessary to the argument, though probably not in the contemplation of the writer of the tract before us, may be stated as follows:—That the authors of the English version had no hesitation of mind with respect to any of their renderings: but were equally right, and equally confident that they were right, in those passages where they agree with, and in those where they differ from, former translators. There can be little doubt that the majority of those persons to whom the present appeal has been made, will take for granted these two facts. How we are to disabuse them of their error, I know not. To dispute, in any degree, the accuracy of the English version, will be a crime of no less magnitude than that which is charged, by his brethren, upon the Roman Catholic, if he denies authenticity to the Latin Vulgate."

Mr. Thelwall.

"The only principle I can find in T.H.'s whole publication is this—that the question we have stirred in our 'Report,—respecting certain versions of the Bible, which are circulated by the British and Foreign Bible Society,' is one which ought not to be brought before 'promiscuous public meetings'—it is not for plain British Christians—but must be reserved for those 'learned and competent judges' 'who are conversant with the history and principles of biblical criticism.' In short our appeal to plain common sense, and common honesty, is represented 'as a mere appeal to popular ignorance.' Here then there seems to be a principle recognized, which the Neologians of Germany hold in common with the priesthood of the Church of Rome: a principle which (followed out to its natural and inevitable consequences) would shut out the multitude of humble Christians altogether from the exercise of any private judgment upon matters of vital importance in religion, and from presuming to read and understand the Bible for themselves. 'You must submit your own understanding and reason to the Church'—say the priests of Rome. 'You must submit your own reason and understanding to those learned critics, who are conversant with the Greek and the Hebrew and the cognate languages, and with oriental literature, &c. &c.' say the Neologians of Germany. Now against all such popery—wherever I find it—I trust I shall ever be ready to protest. And whatsoever attempts may be made, from whatsoever quarter, to puzzle and mystify a plain question, I shall be ready, whether in writing, or 'at promiscuous public meetings,' to bring it back, with God's help and blessing, to a plain common sense question again. Any plain man, who knows and loves his plain English Bible, is fully competent to judge, whether he can conscientiously consent to circulate, directly or indirectly, the Douay Bible as the Word of God. He can take that, and compare it with our authorized version—with regard to such passages (whether more or less important) as we have brought forward in our Report on certain foreign versions: and plain common sense and Christian principle will lead him to a conclusion, which the greatest attainments in sound learning would not alter but confirm. This comparison of the Douay Bible with our authorised version will bring us to the real question at issue."

Is it possible, sir, you can lend the sanction of your name to such reasoning as

this? The unlearned man is to eschew all other popes and priests ; but he is to make your Secretary his pope, your Committee his cardinals, and the English version the inspired text. King James's version is to be his inspired text ; and to know whether any foreign translation is good, he has only to ask Mr. Thelwall whether it accords with the English. And this is to settle the question of various readings and various renderings.

The five allegations of MISREPRESENTATION may be quickly disposed of ; but there is such serious matter connected with the third, as respects the pecuniary affairs of your Society, that it shall be taken last.

1. The first misrepresentation is stated as follows :

“ ‘ The measure of imperfection (says the Christian Observer) which makes a Bible *worse than none*, &c.’ As if there was anything in our statements which could warrant the supposition that *this* was the question !”

There was no “ misrepresentation ” here ; it was merely a general remark. Mr. Thelwall quotes just one detached line ; but the whole sentence is as follows ; and if, sir, you will say that you see any misrepresentation, or implied misrepresentation, it shall be corrected ; but it is invisible to Mr. Wilks and his friends.

“ It would be wicked to circulate a dishonest version, such as what is called the ‘ Improved Version ;’ and it would not be right to circulate one of general gross inaccuracy, even though honest ; *but the measure of imperfection which makes a Bible worse than none*, is a question of degree, upon which a good objector may always raise specious arguments ; yet we do not think that Tindale, or Coverdale, or the Bible Society’s foreign translators, are to be condemned for giving the best in their power, though needing many, and gradually accumulated, corrections, to bring it to the excellence of our present vernacular version.”

2. The second “ misrepresentation ” as stated by Mr. Thelwall as follows :

“ Have we ever ‘ condemned ’ the Bible Society ‘ for giving *the best in their power* ? ’ Our Report on Versions does not, in fact, contain one sentence of condemnation. It is a simple statement of facts that ought to be known. Those who take it up as an accusation, themselves pronounce the heaviest condemnation on the Society they profess to defend.”

There was no misrepresentation in what the Christian Observer said (see the sentence quoted under the first head a few lines back), namely, “ We do not think that Tindale, or Coverdale, or the Bible Society’s foreign translators, are to be condemned for giving the best in their power.” It was a general remark ; it took in all cases (Tindale and Coverdale included) ; and Mr. Thelwall, in applying it to your Report, fits the cap himself. But in truth, sir, what can you think of your Secretary’s affirmation, that your Report does not “ contain one sentence of condemnation,” upon the Bible Society ; and that “ those who take it up as an accusation pronounce the heaviest condemnation on the Society they profess to defend.” You officially published a special “ Report ” invidiously headed, “ Respecting certain versions of the Bible *which are circulated by the British and Foreign Bible Society* ;” none of which versions, said your Secretary, in the Circular prefixed to the Report, “ deserve to be called the word of God ;” and the whole tenor of the speeches at your Anniversary Meeting was a severe reprobation of the Bible Society for printing them ; and the Report itself stated that you had therein given such “ a painful catalogue, taking the whole together, of errors, accommodations, and perversions,” that “ in supposing we were largely furnishing Roman Catholic countries with the BIBLE, we have been labouring under a delusion ;” and yet your Secretary affirms, that your Report “ does not, in fact, contain one sentence of reprobation.” He is welcome to believe,

though neither correctly nor candidly, that the Bible Society has "given the worse where it was equally easy to give a better;" but to assert that it was a "misrepresentation" to speak of your Report as bringing a sentence of condemnation against that Society, must astonish those who are not acquainted with your Secretary's style of writing. It is a pity that not only the Bible Society, but your own advocates, so egregiously mistook your meaning as to think you intended to hold up that Society to reprobation, which your Secretary now tells the world you did not.

3. The next misrepresentation is described as follows :

" ' If no man (says the Christian Observer) will ever give away a Bible till he finds one in which he cannot find a mistake—even a serious mistake, &c.' When and where have we ever put forth any such principle? This is again gross misrepresentation."

It was no misrepresentation, "gross," or otherwise; it was a remark respecting the difficulties which attach to all attempts to do good in an imperfect and sinful world. The writer could not mean any thing so absurd as that your Society really expects to find or make an infallible translation; though in its efforts to attract patronage to itself* it has grossly exaggerated the defects of some of those circulated by its neighbours. You will be astonished, sir, to find that the Christian Observer, which Mr. Thelwall represents as fabricating the "gross misrepresentation," that he put forth the "principle" that he would never give away a Bible till he found one perfect, actually quoted his own words, that "all translations of the Bible made by the most eminent Christian scholars, must unavoidably be subject to imperfections."

* Perhaps, sir, you may consider this as invidious; but Mr. Thelwall's Circular of April 9, 1839, "on behalf of the Committee" of the T. B. S. prefixed to the Report, shews that the attraction of patronage to itself was the real object of the Report upon the Bible Society's versions. But it so happened that the "puff" (if that word may be used for intelligibility without being offensive, if not any other may be substituted) was so obviously tradesmanlike, that it was prudently suppressed in the later edition of the Report; though as the old date is retained, *while the document has been so altered* as to make a posterior date indispensable, you may suppose that this is another of Mr. Wilks's wilful falsehoods, if you have not the two versions at hand for comparison. Here they are :

" If this be the case, and if the result of a careful investigation is, that none of those Popish versions deserve to be called 'the Word of God,' may we not earnestly appeal to British Christians, to come forward with such liberal contributions as may enable a Society formed on Scriptural principles, under the blessing of God, to substitute, in due time, faithful versions, made from the original Hebrew and Greek, in the place of those mis-translations of a mis-translation. In this work the Trinitarian Bible Society feels itself called upon to engage. The Christian portion of the community must decide, whether Christian zeal for the honour of God and of His word, and Christian liberality, shall enable them so to do."

" It is the earnest wish of the Committee to supply Roman Catholic Europe with genuine versions of the Scriptures. Trusting that in the present statement, you will perceive the strongest inducements to aid in this undertaking, and commending the subject to your serious and prayerful consideration."

You must see, sir, that in writing of a Society which thus mutilates documents, without altering the date, or giving any intimation of alteration, the most honourable-minded opponent is constantly rendered liable to the charge of "misrepresentation" by those who know only half the story.

4. Your Secretary specifies the next misrepresentation as follows :—

"The next misrepresentation is of a graver character, because it affects not us, but our excellent Translators, and the Authorized Version which they were the honoured instruments of giving to this country. 'The great majority of biblical critics (says the Christian Observer) have determined, that in embodying the litigated verse, 1 John v. 7, in the sacred text, it interpolates (by mistake, not intentionally) the inspired word with a spurious passage.' Here the Authorized Version (I suppose the writer means *those who made it*) is represented as *embodying* this passage in the sacred text—just as if this were something peculiar to our Authorized Version! . . . But the fact is, that all this reasoning about various Readings, &c. is nothing to the purpose. It is only an *infidel sort of reasoning to help a bad cause.*"

Now, sir, if you will look at the passage in the Christian Observer, you will find no "misrepresentation" grave or otherwise; "no infidel sort of reasoning;" and assuredly no censure upon our venerated translators. They took the ordinarily received text as they found it; that text which for ages had "embodied" the verse on the heavenly Witnesses. Your Secretary quotes part of a sentence, omitting the beginning and the ending. You observe his significant interjection of the words "I suppose the writer means those who made it;" that is, King James's translators; whereas the writer meant no such thing, and expressly personified the word "version" to avoid it. You will see that in Mr. Thelwall's extract there is nothing for the pronoun "it" before "interpolates" to refer to; but in the original passage you will find the words "*that version*," as Mr. Thelwall mentions, to which the pronoun "it" refers. It is quite open to remark whether this idiomatic use of the word "embodies," in the sense of receives into its substance, incorporates with itself, is perfectly elegant; but the word "it" could not mean "those." By substituting "those" the translators are made to foist in a new reading; which is the turn given to it by Mr. Thelwall; but by merely saying the version "embodies," or "includes," there is no specification that this was for the first time; that it was "something peculiar to our authorised version;" for our Reformers only took the passage as they found it; they did not *embody*, but merely retained what they found *embodied*. Besides, the Christian Observer expressly said "by mistake, not intentionally;" meaning that the translators took the reading which they found, though subsequent examination may have proved it incorrect; whereas Mr. Thelwall holds him up to reproof as meaning that they inserted the verse "intentionally," as wilful perverters of God's word. Such habits in your officers do not augur well for the accuracy of your Society's translations, should it ever achieve any.

Mr. Thelwall, having lopped off the beginning of the sentence, lops off also the end, thus leaving his reader to believe that the Christian Observer had vituperated our excellent translators; whereas the very opposite was the purpose of the remark. It was to defend them against the charge of allowing a passage to remain on which hangs much doubt, and to vindicate our own Church for retaining it; for after the words cited by Mr. Thelwall it was immediately added :—

"Very distressing are such considerations to every devout mind; and a popular declaimer might easily excite the clamours of the ignorant, who suppose that every syllable of the true text can be indubitably ascertained and accurately rendered, without doubt or difficulty: but every Christian scholar knows the contrary; and will feel it his duty to circulate the word of God in all the languages of the earth, in the best practicable form, although mixed with much human imperfection, provided the version is really honest, and, upon the whole, well and faithfully executed."

But this was not all that the Christian Observer said upon the subject; and a

further passage shall be cited, as bearing upon the whole discussion. You will see also that there was an *argumentum ad hominem* to your Secretary in the allusion to this litigated reading, which is, that what little weight of testimony it has lies chiefly in its being embodied in the Latin Vulgate.

"We decline, then, mixing up the real question at issue with any discussion as to the merits or demerits of a few particular renderings. The very circumstance that men as well informed, as learned, as Scriptural in their doctrines, as devout, as anxious for the honour of God and the purity of His word, and as truly Protestant as any member of the Trinitarian Society can be, do not discover in those renderings the heterodoxy and wilful corruption which Mr. Thelwall imputes to them, is of itself sufficient proof that the task of correcting versions is not so easy as persons unacquainted with the bearings of the subject might suppose. We are indeed perfectly ready at any time to discuss the correctness or incorrectness of those renderings; but it is altogether unfair, not to say preposterous, as every Biblical scholar well knows, to place the character and proceedings of the Bible Society upon the issue of particular criticisms. We might as well place the character and proceedings of the Trinitarian Society upon the issue whether 1 John v. 7, in the Bibles which it circulates, has any weighty sanction of Greek manuscripts. Will Mr. Thelwall, or any other person, venture to assert that it has? Or will the members of the Trinitarian Society present to the world the evidence upon which they undertake to say that this passage is genuine? Has one in a hundred of them ever examined the subject? Are they even aware that the Dublin manuscript is the only Greek exemplar in which the passage occurs; and that this manuscript is of comparatively modern date, and of no authority; and that, to use the words of Mr. Hartwell Horne, 'it is a servile imitation of the *Latin Vulgate*;' Dr. Adam Clarke also stating his opinion that it is the work of some bold critic, who, not finding the text in any manuscript, foisted in a Greek translation of it from the *Latin Vulgate*. Every scholar knows that it is almost entirely on account of this reading occurring in the *Vulgate*—not certainly from the authority of Greek manuscripts—that it has been adopted in modern versions. Now if Mr. Thelwall had urged against the Bible Society, that in publishing versions grounded upon the *Vulgate* it has embodied a passage which is destitute of manuscript authority, he would have brought a far stronger objection than any one of those which he has adduced against those versions. He may himself believe, though without documental authority, that the passage is genuine; be it so; and grant that the passage is genuine; as every Christian scholar would wish to find it, if he might lawfully wish the word of God to be otherwise than as God has given it. Still, is it not clear that we could never print or issue a single Bible, if we must wait till Christian scholars had unanimously agreed to receive or reject this passage, or any other disputed reading, and in the latter case, to expunge it from all translations and copies. Thousands of clergymen and of Christian ministers of every persuasion, and of pious well-informed laymen, use and distribute Bibles with this passage in them, though feeling grave difficulties as to its authenticity. They circulate what they know to be the word of God, though doubtful as to the authenticity of particular passages or readings. It would be preposterous for the Christian Knowledge Society, or the Bible Society, or even the Trinitarian Society, to appoint a committee to examine the arguments for or against the text on the Heavenly Witnesses, and all other disputed texts or renderings, with a view, if the objections seemed to them to prevail, to alter almost all the versions and copies extant. They must issue the Bible in what is judged to be the best accessible or distributable exemplar, leaving uncertain critical investigations for private consideration. We assert, without fear of contradiction, that no two members of the Trinitarian Society, if competent to examine the question of texts, readings, versions, and revisions, would ever agree in every tittle, or probably in every important matter, so that one would hold up to the world as a part of the word of God what his brother did not believe to be so. What then is to be done, but what all churches and Christian societies have done from the beginning; and what the Trinitarian Society itself does and must do, if it issue any one copy of any version extant, or ever likely to be extant? Is it pretended that every person who subscribes a penny a week to Mr. Thelwall's Society has satisfied himself that every passage is genuine, and every rendering faithful, even in our own invaluable authorised translation? If not, he is placed in the same difficulty as the members of all other Bible Societies; and it would be as absurd as it would be uncharitable, to accuse him of neology, latitudinarianism, and tampering with the word of God, because he aided the circulation of versions or editions,

which, however useful or excellent upon the whole, he might be shewn were not immaculate.

"It is very reluctantly that we have touched upon these questions; because though perfectly familiar to Christian scholars, they are not, and cannot be, understood by persons who have not directed their attention to the subject. The servants of Christ must be willing in this, as in many other things, to bear reproach, while they are endeavouring faithfully to serve their Lord."

5. And now, sir, you have arrived at the last, and, for your own sake as President, a very momentous head of inquiry. Mr. Thelwall specifies as follows the Christian Observer's fifth misrepresentation:

"It is stated that the Trinitarian Bible Society 'has consumed seven years of time' 'in printing animadversions upon Bibles issued by its neighbours, without putting forth a single new version of its own to occupy their place.' When this was written, barely two years had elapsed since we first turned our attention to Foreign Translations, and undertook a revised Version. And as to 'printing animadversions upon Bibles issued by its neighbours'—would not this lead one to think, that what we have done in one instance, in a single pamphlet of 16 pages, had been a main part of our business all along? What a combination of ignorance and misrepresentation is there in this one assertion!"

Mr. Thelwall begins as usual with convenient omission. The Christian Observer said, "has consumed seven years of time, *and not a little of its subscribers' money, which ought to have been devoted to circulating Bibles*, in printing animadversions upon Bibles issued by its neighbours, without putting forth a single new version of its own to occupy their place." You will perceive, sir, that your Secretary has suppressed the words printed in italics, about the subscribers' money, and the object for which it was bestowed. There is always something ominous when, in commenting upon a document, a very important part of it is suppressed; and it shall be shewn that your Secretary had good reason for his caution, in not reminding your subscribers of what shall now be communicated to yourself.

The purport of your Secretary's statement is, that Mr. Wilks is "a combination of ignorance and misrepresentation," because he says that much time and money, which should have been devoted to circulating Bibles, had been spent in animadversions upon Bibles issued by others; whereas this had happened only "*in one instance in a single pamphlet of sixteen pages.*" You have made no animadversions upon Bibles issued by others except in this solitary pamphlet. You have spent no money in controversy but in this pamphlet; so that with this slight exception every subscriber ought to be satisfied with the way in which both your biblical labours and your financial concerns have been conducted. Now, sir, for the facts; with which you personally are not acquainted, but which will and must command your examination, as President of the Society, when made known to you. You shall hear a recital most extraordinary and most melancholy.

If, sir, you have published but one pamphlet of aggressive controversy, you have broken the rules of your Society as much as if you had published a hundred. Had a mis-statement been issued respecting you, it might have been necessary for you to clear up the matter; but it cannot be said that an unprovoked attack upon the versions of another Society is a legitimate object of your institution. This litigious spirit, though it has collected around you some whom you might well be glad to be rid of, has alienated from you the great body of Christian men throughout the land, and brought down to zero the confidence of most of those who were once friends of your Society.

But, sir, as to the allegation that your Society has issued but one controversial pamphlet, the truth is, that you have issued many ; not only those (as shall be shown) which are avowedly such, but a far larger number, under the plausible name of reports, speeches, and correspondence ; for if you will look at your documents you will find that they are not like those of the Christian Knowledge, the Church Missionary, the National Education, the Bible, and numerous other Societies, bursting with facts, but sparing in remark, and almost free from rival controversy ; but on the contrary you will discern that they are almost entirely polemical pamphlets ; not so much concerning the *res gesta* of your institution, as a vehicle for the expression of private opinions. And when, sir, it is remembered that of your reports alone you have printed annually vast numbers, varying from 3,000 up to 30,000 (!!!) whereas the number of your members is by no means large, you will see at once that even if you had kept (which you have not) the promise *verbally* of not being a Pamphlet Society, but a Bible Society, you have not kept it substantially. If your object is to circulate controversial tracts under the name of reports, speeches, and letters ; why is not the Society called officially—as it is out of doors—a controversial tract society ? Only one little pamphlet of sixteen pages against the Bible Society ! Why what is the Report of 1837 but such a pamphlet,—an elaborate attack upon that Society by name ; and what is the letter-press of three fourths, or more, of most of your documents, but controversial matter ? Many of your own subscribers justly remonstrate at this, and reasonably ask, why if they cannot unite with other societies, they should not do their own business in peace and charity. Your Report for 1837 made a laboured but very awkward and unsatisfactory apology for this. You said—

“ In the present position of the Trinitarian Bible Society, instances are not unfrequently occurring, in which its *principal exertions* are called for in maintaining principle ; whilst *scarcely an opportunity is given, for entering upon its actual operations as a Bible Society*. For you have friends in various parts of the country, who feel the value and importance of your principles, and who wish them to be extensively made known and advocated ; and who yet can give you but little encouragement, as to any immediate prospect of efficient operations in their respective neighbourhoods. And it was more especially from these circumstances, that the necessity arose, of appointing a regular Clerical Secretary.”

Your object, therefore, in paying £300 per annum to a Clerical Secretary is not to transact “ operations as a Bible Society,” but to “ maintain principle ;” that is, to write party pamphlets ; whether under the name of Reports or otherwise—unless it be meant that all other Christians have abandoned “ principle.” You will see, by a financial outline at a future page, how much of your subscribers’ money has gone to each of these objects—the biblical and the pamphleteering. Of course Reports, and a reasonable extent of speeches and correspondence, must be published by every Society for the satisfaction of its constituents ; but the objection to the conduct of your Committee is, that the proportion is unreasonable. If you have not facts, to make a long Report, you should make a short one, and thus spare your subscribers’ money to purchase Bibles.

The course of the present remarks, in regard to the litigious character of your institution, has led to the mention chiefly of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as the object of your censures ; but it is its general character which is justly complained of ; for though the attack is mainly directed against one Society, there runs an under-current of rebuke throughout your publications of a very indiscriminate kind ; and sometimes with a grievous recklessness of consequences. You, sir, may not be aware, that in the very infancy of your institu-

tion a project was set on foot, which, but for the special providence of God overruling all things for his own glory, might have led to the most disastrous results. It was not without signification that the Christian Observer said, "Ani-madversions upon Bibles issued by its neighbours," not confining the word "neighbours" to the Bible Society. For your very first Report, sir, made a violent attack upon the English Bible, as it is printed at both the universities, and by the king's printer; as it is used in every church, meeting-house, and family in the land; as it is issued by all the Bible institutions, not only in England and Scotland, but wherever the English language is spoken; so that had your Committee been able to succeed in creating a general panic, as they endeavoured to do, every person must have come to your institution for Bibles, and thus you would have had a monopoly.

It is well known, that though an authorised version was made by King James's translators, no authorised printed text, as in the case of the sealed Prayer-books, was set forth. The edition of 1611 abounds in errors; and besides direct errors it is not consistent with itself, especially in the notation corresponding to our modern Italic characters. But more than two hundred years ago great attention had been paid to revision; and much was also effected subsequently, till the whole was brought to that state of correctness and excellence in which we now happily possess it; and in which, by means of many millions of copies, and stereotype castings, in great varieties of size and type, it is fixed to a standard text. How or when the amendments came in, is not now the question; but no man who knows any thing of the subject would wish to go back to the hastily-printed faulty exemplar of 1611, which did not do justice to the intentions of the translators. But a prodigious outcry your Society made; and you solemnly declared, in your very first Report, that you would not circulate any Bibles with marginal references for the present; though the marginal references rest upon the same basis as the alterations in the Italics or headings.

In addition to the strong remarks in the Report, you published two added pages of "Variations from the AUTHORIZED [in capitals] edition of 1611, in the editions of the Bible at present in circulation;" thus alarming the minds of the weak and ignorant; and so sedulous were you in the work, that you issued the incredible number of *thirty thousand* copies of this inflammatory Report!

But the bubble soon burst. The University of Oxford, in answer to the charges raised against the current version, published a reprint of the edition of 1611; and Mr. Cardwell and others, but especially Dean Turton, exhibited so ably the folly of recurring to that edition as a standard text, that the public were disabused; and your Society, finding it had not succeeded in its object, was obliged to quit the field; but still leaving behind a loop to hang some future contention upon, if opportunity should offer.—(See Report for 1835, p. 13.)

This effort to procure patronage to your Society, by distracting the whole body of Christians throughout the world where the English language is spoken, ought to be looked upon with sorrow and shame by those who devised the project. Blessed be God it signally failed; and the wives and daughters even of your own subscribers have returned in quietness of mind to their old-fashioned Bibles; forgetful of all the declamation about a spurious text and unauthorized marginal comments.

The charge, sir, that your Society expended much of its money on controversial writing, which ought to have been devoted to purchasing Bibles, was made many years before the late "single pamphlet of sixteen pages" was written; though

for many years the delinquency has been left unnoticed, and might have been still, had not your Secretary provoked a re-investigation. The following passage, from the *Christian Observer* for 1832, p. 364, shews how early complaints went abroad on this subject :—

“ We have been pronounced uncharitable, for asking how large a portion of the funds subscribed for the circulation of the word of God, has been employed by Committees called ‘Trinitarian,’ to circulate tracts and pamphlets calumniating the Bible Society. The best answer to the question would have been to throw open the books, minutes, and proceedings, concealed with such studious secrecy; but here is at least one published document in proof; for on the title page of the anti-Bible Society pamphlet, it is stated that it is ‘printed for the Retford Trinitarian Bible Society,’ according to a resolution of the Committee, in which it is ‘ordered to be printed and circulated *at the cost of the Society.*’ Is Retford altogether so corrupt in religion, as well as in other matters, that there is no subscriber, no collector, no contributor of a penny a week from his hard-earned pittance, who has spirit and honesty enough to go to this unanimous Committee, and demand back his offering thus sacrilegiously wrested from the altar of God, to foment purposes of strife and controversy? But we need not dwell upon the point, as the subscribers to the Societies called Trinitarian are beginning to open their eyes, and to say to their conductors, You have sent us bitter controversial papers and tracts by hundreds and thousands; when will you remit us a few Bibles? What a clamour would have been raised, and justly, if the British and Foreign Bible Society had thus abused its sacred funds to print controversial pamphlets?”

An inspection of your annual balance-sheets will shew that these complaints were but too well-founded. The first of these documents shall furnish an illustration. The first article on the Receipt side is “Balance of account of the Provisional Committee, 8s. 4d. ;” the first article on the Payment side is, “Expences incurred in the formation of the Society by the Provisional Committee, and not provided for by them (see page 45) £181. 1s. 1d.” Here the Provisional Committee pays over “a balance” of 8s. 4d., and entails a debt of £181. 1s. 1d. This is an odd way of settling an account and striking “a balance.” But it may be said that the Provisional Committee considered certain expences as properly in its own department; from which side a few shillings were left and handed over to you; and certain other expences to belong legitimately to the Society. Be it so. The 8s. 4d. is the balance left from £156. 1s. 1d. expended on advertisements, circulars, and office expences; and this large sum is not carried to the Society’s balance-sheet. But what is so carried? What is made the debt, not of the Provisional Committee, but of the “Trinitarian Bible Society,” a year after its formation; and is defrayed by it out of its subscribers’ money? The ambiguous words “expences” (£181. 1s. 1d.) incurred in the formation of the Society,” do not cover the advertisements, circulars, &c. beforementioned, amounting to £155. 12s. 9d.; for these were paid for out of the first receipts from individuals and seceding “Bible Societies,” (a strange misappropriation of funds subscribed for Bibles); nor do they cover hire of Exeter Hall, for two general meetings, with 30,000 reports, statements, advertisements, office expences, &c.; much of which might seem to be included in the phrase “expences incurred in the formation of the Society;” but the whole of which is additional. What then are the articles included in this the Society’s own annual balance-sheet, audited by its auditors, and paid for out of its funds? They are the following :—

Printing several thousands of Circular Letters, Addresses, and Ex-	£	s.	d.
tracts of Correspondence	64	10	6
Stationery.....	9	4	9
Office Hire, Coals, and Candles	9	15	0
2500 'Letters to President, &c., of the British and Foreign Bible Society,' 3000 First and Second 'Letter to Friends and Subscribers of the British and Foreign Bible Society,' by Monitor.....	29	11	9
1000 'Observations to Trinitarian Friends of the Bible Society,' by a Clerical Member.....	4	9	6
150 'Letters to the Right Hon. Lord Teignmouth,' by Hon. and Rev. G. T. Noel.	8	3	0
1000 'Extracts from Christian Guardian,' and sundry other Pamphlets	9	1	9
2500 'Appeal to Members of the British and Foreign Bible Society,' by the Rev. G. W. Philips	14	18	10
4700 'Reply to a Letter from the Rev. A. Brandram,' by T. P. Platt, Esq.....	23	16	6
	<hr/>		
	173	11	7
Bill delivered after the above audit for 1000 'An Address,' by Charlotte Elizabeth; and other Pamphlets	7	9	6
	<hr/>		
	£181	1	1

Here then is a long list of controversial pamphlets paid for by the Trinitarian Bible Society, out of money contributed on the faith that it would be employed for purchasing Bibles. Fifteen thousand eight hundred and fifty controversial pamphlets; besides the significant addition of, "and other pamphlets!" to say nothing of the thirty-thousand reports; and also all the statements, advertisements, circulars, both "Provisional" and "Trinitarian." And yet your Secretary has the courage to say, "In one instance, in a single pamphlet of sixteen pages."

The above balance-sheet is audited by Mr. Christian, Mr. Dunderdale, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Habershon; all of whom, except Mr. Dunderdale, were members of the Committee.

But in order, sir, that you may perceive the whole character of your expenditure, the following astounding abstract is submitted to your attention. One or two reports might give a more unfavourable impression than the average; but the result of the whole period of the Society's existence will shew fairly the manner in which its pecuniary affairs are managed.*

* In the first Edition of the Statement there was a detailed analysis of the accounts, gathered from an examination of the annual reports from the commencement, with a view to shew how unproductive had been the free contributions to the Society in the work of biblical circulation. This being the main point of the case,—that which, if rebutted, minor details are of little consequence; and if substantiated, are superfluous,—and being also susceptible of direct and easy proof from the Society's own aggregate figures, the argument in the text is now confined to this; and the rather, as few persons will take the pains to examine minute calculations, and arguments also may be raised on minor details; not to add that reiterations and urging of particulars in controversial matters lead to apparent harshness; which it is best—both for truth and charity—to avoid.

It must however be observed, that the present calculation respecting the results of the Society's expenditure is not a recession from the ground taken in the first edition, but an advance upon it; for the estimate there given was much too favourable to the Society. The present is direct and brief, and the Society's own documents are referred to by year and page; so that its defenders and opponents would do well to come to the nucleus of the question; though should any reply be made to the particulars in the detailed statement, the grounds of the calculation are forthcoming.

The examination was made by a gentleman conversant with commercial accounts, from a volume containing the whole of the Society's reports and appendixes, which had been bound up from the commencement, without any

Your "free receipts," that is, donations, subscriptions, congregational and other collections, &c., have amounted to £9871. 4s. 11d. ; of which (deducting assets) you have expended £7636. 5s. 4d. This large sum was contributed by your subscribers to be sacredly devoted (deducting only *necessary* charges of management,) to the distribution of the word of God, and not for controversial purposes. But by the account (Report, 1839, p. 72) of "loss to the Society" by "Donations and Grants at reduced prices of the Sacred Scriptures," your whole expenditure upon bibles out of the £7636. 5s. 4d. has been only £1476. 16s. 8d. ; that is, *not twenty per cent. of the amount of your subscriptions, donations, and collections*. It is not stated in your publications that you have lost by the aggregate of sales to the public, to auxiliaries, and to subscribers; on the first of which there is a good profit; on the second the scale is in your favour; and on the third the transactions are not mentioned in your reports to have outbalanced the others. The gains may probably have preponderated; (for your charges are

reference to this inquiry. In the Second Report he found £1022. 13s. 2d. had been expended; but there was no account how; all that was specified respecting the distribution of Bibles, was that "the greater part have been sold at cost price, with the exception of some few instances in favour of schools." There was nothing to shew how much of the *free contributions* (of which only the Committee had the disposal) had gone for Bibles, and how much for printing and incidental expenses, which was the object of inquiry. It appeared that an abstract of the accounts of the Society had been read at the anniversary; but it was not found appended to the Report. Mr. Wilks had written to the treasurer Mr. Labouchere as long ago as last January, requesting information on this point; stating that he had himself referred to two copies of the Report, but they had no balance sheet. The one copy was entitled "The Second Annual Report;" but the other, a prior one, was entitled "The Second Annual Report, with an Appendix," and therefore purported to be the whole document, and of course containing the usual balance-sheet, if the Society had issued one. Mr. Wilks particularly mentioned to the Treasurer that he sought for the information, in case the pertinacity with which the friends of the Society were circulating the Secretary's Letter to Mr. Stanley should render any discussion imperative. He said, "I respectfully address you as Treasurer, lest it should be afterwards said that I ought to have sought an explanation before commenting upon the Report; and I shall be truly glad if you can favour me with any statement to set aside the above-mentioned inferences."

To this letter the Treasurer replied as follows:—

"Upper Harley Street, Jan. 27, 1840.

"Mr. John Labouchere presents his compliments to Rev. Mr. Wilks, and begs to inform him, in reply to his letter, that he has no doubt that both copies of the Reports and of the accounts are open to the inspection of any subscriber at the office of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and that the Secretaries are always ready to afford any explanation which members of the Society may require respecting them. Mr. L. begs to add, that he does not feel called upon to state whether the Secretaries would consider themselves justified in submitting the Reports or accounts of the Society to the inspection of a non-subscriber, and must, therefore, in regard to the object of his inquiry, refer Mr. Wilks to those gentlemen."

No inquiry could be more fairly conducted than the above. First, "The Report" was examined; then another copy, which contained also the "Appendix;" and then, as if this were not enough, application was respectfully made to the Treasurer for further information; and his reply was, that the documents of the Society—its printed Reports, its audited balance-sheet—are so strictly private, so carefully concealed, that he did not feel called upon to state whether the Secretaries would consider themselves justified in shewing them to a non-subscriber, which of course was a refusal.

Since the former Edition of the "Statement" was published, it has been said that there was a third form of the Report; that is, first "The Report;" secondly "The Report with an Appendix;" and thirdly "The Report" with an "Appendix," and another "Appendix;" and that this last was sent to the subscribers;

higher than those of the Christian Knowledge and British and Foreign Bible Societies); but it is quite certain there has been no such loss as materially to raise the above figures. Taking then your own statement of loss, your expenditure is eighty per cent. of the whole of your subscriptions, donations, and collections at Churches and Anniversaries, for "management," which includes office expenses, postage, rent, printing reports, papers, and pamphlets, salaries, and travelling expenses, and a few slight incidentals. Thus, every sovereign given by yourself, Sir, to the Society, is pared down to four shillings; the rest going for expenses. Of the poor man's penny, not so much as a farthing ever finds its way out of your office.

It appears also, from your Report for 1839, page 28, that you had received expressly for bibles £10,464. 8s. Od.; but this of course is not disposable income; you had only to pay over the money to the authorised presses and to convey the books.

There is however no wish to state things harshly. Officers ought to be suitably

though the Treasurer did not consider a stranger entitled to see it. But why any mystery in the matter? Why at least did not the Treasurer say, that besides "the Report," and "the Report with an Appendix;" there had been also a Report with "an Appendix and an Appendix," which last contained the balance-sheet, and that it had been sent to the subscribers, though he doubted whether strangers ought to inspect it? Mr. Wilks's letter mentioned that the explanation was sought for, lest it should afterwards be said that it ought to have been asked for before any comment was made on the Report; and not to give information, even if the sight of the document was withheld, was laying a trap (it is not meant intentionally) for a misstatement. It was remarked in a former page of this pamphlet (page 67) upon another occasion, that in writing of a Society whose documents appear in such variable forms, "the most honourable-minded opponent is constantly rendered liable to the charge of misrepresentation by those who know only half the story."

The object of the inquiry was, to ascertain what portion of the £1022 was expended in Bibles; and whether any of it had been devoted to controversial printing. The question of course applied only to the disposable portion; that is, the free contributions: but what proportion this bore to the total could not be ascertained without the balance-sheet. The detail however is now of little consequence, as the calculations in the present edition rest upon the total of the Society's transactions.

There was also a paragraph in the first edition upon the Society's assets, which was not clearly expressed. Its purport was, that as the Society appeared to have received £20,335. 12s. 11d., and expended £19,830. 17s. 4d., the cash balance in its favour was £504. 15s. 7d. But it had also reported assets of Bibles and debts due to it for Bibles; and it was argued that if assets were reported, so ought also liabilities, in order to shew a Society's actual condition. The case was put of a Society owing more for Bibles than was owing to it for Bibles; and it was assumed, that *for anything that appeared to the contrary*, this might be the fact in the present instance; but the question did not turn upon the little or much; but simply upon the fact that reporting assets without liabilities gives so far a one-sided and too favourable view of a Society's affairs. This however is but a minor detail; the great matter is that so large a portion of the aggregate of the Society's disposable income has been expended upon "management," including enormously large sums for controversial printing.

In what was said of concealment, it was not meant that the gentlemen concerned do not consider they acted rightly—their motives are not matters of question; but only that they do not choose to submit their proceedings to public criticism. One of the special charges against the Society is its secrecy; its business being transacted by a close committee; that is, practically, by a very few officers. There is not, of course, the slightest idea of imputing any incorrectness in the reports of the Society's pecuniary transactions. There was no question that the allocation, for instance, of the disposable portion of the income of 1833 was clearly stated in the balance-sheet; all that was said or meant was, that it was not all spent (or a due portion of it) upon Bibles; but that some of it went for controversial printing.

remunerated, and many of the necessary expences of management are heavier in proportion as a Society is smaller; so that much of the money contributed to an institution like yours is inevitably unproductive. Again: the sale of Bibles not paid for out of the free contributions, adds to the business of the establishment; and is not meant to be overlooked; but on the other hand, your legitimate expences have been much lightened by the circumstance that you did not till very lately turn your attention to foreign translation; so that you had merely to send your orders to the universities, or the king's printers, and to supply your home customers; without the heavy expences of foreign agents, translators, founts in new languages, foreign printing, and wide correspondence.

A vehement but unjust outcry was made by some of the founders of the Trinitarian Bible Society against several other institutions, respecting "expences of management;" and it was held out that a Bible Society "upon scriptural principles," might do its work by gratuitous agency, so as to circulate Bibles almost to the whole extent of its receipts. Had the Trinitarian Bible Society been able to effect this romantic scheme, it would, from its £20,335. 12s. 11d., have sent out Bibles 85,805 instead of 40,392; and Testaments 64,177, instead of 31,433; (calculating upon the large average of sizes, proportions of bibles and testaments, and cost price of the whole of its donations and grants); that is, its issues ought to have been considerably more than double what they have been! It were absurd to have expected this; for there are many necessary and contingent expences, large and small, in conducting the business of a Bible Society; more especially where foreign objects are embraced; but this only shows the injustice or ignorance of those who declaimed against other institutions, the relative management of which is but a small fraction of that of the new "no-patronage" Society.

Thus concludes the reply to the fifth allegation of "misrepresentation." It is strictly defensive. Mr. Wilks had abstained for many years from making any remark upon your Society, though these facts were forthcoming, because he wished for peace rather than war. At length, in reply to your Committee's attack upon another institution, he remarked that you had better have been transacting your own business, than spending so much time and money upon other objects than biblical circulation; whereupon he is taunted with misrepresentation, and one single pamphlet of sixteen pages is held up as the extent of your Society's delinquencies. He is thus forced to shew you the grounds upon which he made his statement; and can you, sir, say that he was guilty of "misrepresentation?"

The above particulars do not however comprise all that might be mentioned in regard to the exceptionable proceedings of your Society. The points have arisen only incidentally in replying to your Secretary's charges; nor have even all those been noticed which are germane to his remarks. You may, for instance, have observed, in the passage last quoted from him, a very remarkable admission. "Barely two years had elapsed" last summer "since we first turned our attention to foreign translations." Wherein note first, that your Society at its formation endeavoured to close up all the channels then existing in England—and of course all similar channels throughout the world—for supplying the heathen and the desolate parts of Christendom with the word of God, without so much as "turning its attention" to supply the defect. Note secondly, that it was not till another Trinitarian Society—the Christian Knowledge Society—had formed a translation fund, so that your aid was not asked for or needed, (for the members of the Church of England had now their own special

Society ; and the members of the Church of Scotland had also their own in Edinburgh ; and the Methodists and Dissenters went to Earl Street) that you first turned your attention towards this important object. To overlook, neglect, or check " foreign translations " in the first instance, was fearfully reckless ; to meddle when they were already undertaken by another strictly " Trinitarian Society," was schismatical.

But one mend-fault is worth many find-faults ; permit therefore, sir, in conclusion, an amicable, and, it is hoped, useful suggestion. Your Society cannot hold long together to any large extent ; the Dissenters and you have separated long ago ; and the rent is wide and deep between your Episcopalian and Presbyterian members ; and the latter must lose what little confidence remains, when they hear of the plot for landing them on a desert island at Liverpool, and leaving the Episcopalians in possession of the ship. There is one remedy for all these evils ; one plain road to peace and usefulness. Let the Episcopal members, as they cannot subscribe to the British and Foreign Bible Society, contribute doubly to the funds of the Christian Knowledge Society, whence they can procure Bibles at home, and help to circulate them abroad, and also Prayer-books, without being obliged to purchase Tracts. The Methodists and Evangelical Dissenters can get their Home Bibles, and also promote foreign objects, by going to Earl Street ; as many churchmen delight to do, in addition to their Christian Knowledge Subscription. Lastly, let the members of the church of Scotland procure their Bibles, and aid foreign versions, through the Edinburgh Bible Society, which is constructed upon your own plan ; *and let your Society be made a London Branch of it.* There will then be no schism ; and that no pecuniary loss may arise to any one, request your present Secretary, and the Superintendent of Translations, and the subordinate officers of your establishment, to transfer their services to the new Institution. This is the only feasible plan for putting an end to the accumulating perplexities of a Society rashly formed, and destitute of the elements of stability.

It were superfluous, sir, to repeat, that in saying *you, your, your Society*, and the like, the address is only official, not personal ; nothing can be further from the thoughts of Mr. Wilks, or any friend of his, than to pen one word intentionally disrespectful to yourself, or to those members of your Committee or Society who are unacquainted with the real state of the facts. They are now laid bare, and He who ruleth over all will be the Judge.

POSTSCRIPT, MAY 1, 1840.

The substance of the above Statement was prepared several months ago, soon after the publication of Mr. Thelwall's pamphlet ; but it was laid aside from extreme reluctance to embark in such a controversy, and a willingness to suffer wrong rather than do so ; and also in the hope that the friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society would, upon calm consideration, have the wisdom to see, and the kindness to feel, that they could do better without their Secretary's ill-judged defence than with it ; or at least that the significant fact that all the publishers, except one who is a member of their own Committee, had withdrawn from all connexion with the pam-

phlet, would induce them to leave it to its quietude. But this has not been the case ; and the present papers are now revived and enlarged, in consequence of the zeal with which it is being still urged by them into circulation ; and especially of the extraordinary circumstance that it is advertised as something "this day" published (in April) by two booksellers, both of whom are on the Committee of the Trinitarian Bible Society, and by them only ; whereas, upon purchasing a copy, it turns out to be the old pamphlet dated December 2, 1839, with all the withdrawn names still upon it ; and without the new name announced in the advertisements as one of the publishers. This pertinacity renders some reply imperative.

